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**Social structure and social change in Iran from 1500 to 1979**

**Foran, John Francis, Ph.D.**

**University of California, Berkeley, 1988**

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**Social Structure and Social Change in Iran from 1500 to 1979**

**By**

**John Francis Foran**

**B.A. (Amherst College) 1977**

**M.A. (University of California) 1981**

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*Nov 15, 1988*

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**DOCTORAL DEGREE CONFERRED**

**DECEMBER 20, 1988**

**Social Structure and Social Change in Iran from 1500 to 1979**

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# **"Social Structure and Social Change in Iran from 1500 to 1979"**

**John Foran**

## **Abstract**

This study analyzes social structure and social change (conceived as both gradual long-term transformations and social movements) in Iran over the five centuries from 1500 to 1979. Several theoretical perspectives in the sociology of development are critically synthesized into a single framework for this purpose: dependency, modes of production, world-system, the nature of the state, and political cultures of opposition and legitimation. Social change is conceptualized as a product of internal social structure and external political and economic factors, to which the various social classes and groups in Iran have responded through the prisms of their own political cultures and value orientations.

Empirical analysis based on extensive consultation of secondary historiography and published primary sources applies this perspective to three major periods: pre-capitalist Iran under the Safavid dynasty from 1500 to 1800, the reign of the Qajars from 1800 to 1925, and the rise and fall of the Pahlavis between 1925 and 1979. Among the key findings may be noted: the conceptualization of pre-capitalist social structure as a combination of three modes of production (pastoral nomadic, peasant crop-sharing and petty commodity); the intertwined economic, political and ideological crises that led to the fall of the Safavids in 1722; the movement of Iran from the external arena of the world-economy in the seventeenth century to the periphery in the nineteenth; the concomitant dependency of the Qajar political economy on Russia and Great Britain by 1900; and the pattern of urban, multi-class populist alliances as reactions of aggrieved classes to state domination and foreign power in the major social movements of the twentieth century—the 1905-11 Constitutional Revolution, the 1951-53 oil nationalization movement and the 1977-79 revolution.

Various theoretical and empirical debates addressed in the course of the research include the impact of the West on Iranian social structure, the roles played by economic, political and cultural factors in social movements, the reasons for success or failure of revolutionary movements, and a new model of revolution, based on the theoretical perspectives used throughout and the result of comparative reflection on Iran's modern social movements.

*Thomas B. Gold Nov 15, 1983*

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## Preface—a Reader's Guide

This is in some ways an unusual manuscript, and by way of a "preface," perhaps a guide to reading it would be of most use. Certainly it is unusually lengthy, and this is the almost inevitable consequence of its subject matter, which encompasses both a broad topic—social change in its many forms—and a vast period—the five centuries of the "modern world." It is also the outcome of the author's need to assimilate and work through a great amount of data and concrete historical and sociological problems and debates. Rather than putting off readers by its length, I hope that this work reaches its intended audiences, of which there are at least two: sociologists interested in Third World development and social change, and specialists in Iranian society and history from several disciplines. (A third, smaller group—historical sociologists of Iran and the Middle East—must also exist, and will hopefully find every page of interest!) The sociological reader may want to concentrate on the theoretical issues and only rather generally on the most significant empirical findings; s/he is advised to look closely at Chapter One and the Conclusions; then at the introductions and conclusions to each of the three parts; and finally at the key sections of Chapters Two through Nine, readily identified in the Table of Contents—sections such as V of Chapter Two, II and VII of Chapter Three, I.E, II.E and IV of Chapter Four, IV of Chapter Five, II.D, III.C and IV.A of Chapter Six, III.D and IV of Chapter Seven, I.C, II.F and III.D of Chapter Eight, and I and V of Chapter Nine. For the details on which these analytic conclusions rest, the reader may then return to the preceding text in each case.

The Iran specialist, on the other hand, will naturally enter more deeply into the substantive empirical chapters, as his or her interest in the various periods dictates. While this reader will know the underlying literature and historical details much better, it is still hoped that there are both new facts culled from wide reading and an overall analytic interpretation that will hold the reader's interest. As this work rests on the labors of Iran scholars in several academic fields, it relies to a

great degree on their achievements. I would like to here register my debt to all the sources cited in this study, and invite readers to continue the process of my education by sending me their informed comments, corrections, criticisms and suggestions for further reading (especially in Persian). I can be reached through the Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara, California, 93106. The present results are only a first approximation (but also a summation) that requires further empirical inputs and conceptual refinement, and is a collective enterprise in the sense mentioned above.

Finally, to smooth the path for all readers, a few stylistic conventions should be noted. First, for the non-Iranian reader, there is a glossary in Appendix III of Persian, Arabic and Turkish terms appearing more than once in the text. The transliteration of Persian into English benefits from no universally agreed upon system; I have adopted for the most part that of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Thus Khomeini is rendered Khumaini, Mossadegh is Mussadiq, and so on, with a very few exceptions and inevitable inconsistencies. The left quote mark, as in Shari'ati, 'Ali and 'Abbas, represents the letter *ain*; it is essentially a silent pause before a vowel sound. Otherwise, no long or short vowels have been indicated by me in the text (though these are preserved, as is the original transliteration, whenever a quotation is given). As the Iranian calendar begins on the first day of spring in March, and is 621 years behind the Christian one, certain dates in the text are given as two years separated by a "/": e.g. 1977/78 signifies March 21, 1977 to March 21, 1978. For bibliographic purposes I have simply added 621 to Iranian dates of publication: thus 1348/1969 rather than the more cumbersome but strictly accurate 1348/1969-70. There is one stylistic inconsistency (at least) in this long text, in the system of footnotes. Chapters Two through Six document virtually every individual fact; as this led to 500 and sometimes 600 footnotes in a single chapter, the last three chapters use block-type notes on each paragraph, but also identify any quoted material separately. Neither system is clearly superior; hopefully the first will not prove too distracting and second not too frustrating.

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## **Chapter One**

### **A Framework for the Study of Social Change in Iran**

#### **I. Introduction to the Problem**

The vast social movements which swept across Iran in 1978-79 and toppled the Shah from power through an unprecedented combination of massive unarmed street demonstrations, a determined general strike lasting several months and a brief guerrilla uprising in February 1979 have begun to generate a considerable body of social science literature, as both longtime researchers and a growing group of younger scholars struggle to come to terms with the causes, form and timing of the revolution, as well as its more recent, rather tortuous course and uncertain future prospects. Controversies have arisen as to whether (or to what degree) the upheaval has been an "Islamic" or a "social" revolution (or even merely a political change of elites); the nature of the roles played by workers, the urban poor, students, ulama (Muslim scholars and preachers), "old" and "new" middle classes of bazaar merchants and professionals, and long-suffering rural groups; the weight to be accorded outside factors such as the dependent aspects of Iran's relations with the West; and finally, the relative importance of political and economic versus religious and ideological variables as central explanatory dimensions. Yet the dramatic events on which these questions are focused constitute only the most recent instance in a very long and rich history of Iranian social change, political and economic development and underdevelopment, and social movements. And, as I shall be arguing at some length, an understanding of the events and resolution of the debates they have touched off is best not dissociated from a careful analysis of earlier cases of social change from the sixteenth century onward.

This study focuses on the changing nature of Iran's society, state and economy over a time-frame of almost five centuries, and is intended to shed light on the principal features of the process

of social change in Iran during this period, a process which has taken the general shape of a long transformation from pre-capitalist forms of social and economic organization to a more capitalist (though underdeveloped) system of production, punctuated along the way by social and political movements of several kinds, including tribal civil wars, urban rebellions, attempted social revolutions and successful coups d'état. The term "social change" in this study thus covers both gradual social structural transformations and sudden, shorter-term social movements aimed at changing the distribution of power in society, and the complex relations between these processes and movements.

A major hypothesis underlying this research is that any adequate understanding of social change in Iran, past and present, requires detailed examination of the ways in which contact with the West over several centuries has shaped Iran's social structure, both by incorporating the country into the world market system as a dependent supplier of raw materials and by activating a series of resistance movements against Western domination in its various forms and against the internal tyranny of a despotic (if often weakly centralized) monarchic state. This is not to say that "The West caused everything," but rather that a complex and changing set of relations between internal and external actors and structures accounts in large part for the particular forms that social change has historically assumed in Iran.

To evaluate this proposition, several theoretical approaches to underdevelopment and social change have to be critically synthesized into a broad and flexible framework of analysis. This chapter argues that three major theories of underdevelopment—dependency, world-system and modes of production analysis—are mutually compatible and together largely capable of accounting for long-term processes of social transformation in Third World countries. Two further lines of inquiry permit this general perspective to better analyze social movements—Theda Skocpol's attention to the potential autonomy of the state in her structural model of social revolution, and A. Sivanandan's concept of "disorganic development," which hypothesizes the emergence of indigenous forms of cultural and political opposition to dependent capitalist development. Finally, I will argue that these strands of thought should be operationalized for the case study of Iran by a comparative-historical methodology and the location of a comprehensive explanation of social change in the dialectical

tension between structures of relatively more "objective" social and economic organization and processes of relatively more "subjective" collective responses to them rooted in the shared political and cultural orientations of various groups and social classes. The chapter closes with an overview of the structure of this dissertation, a discussion of the sources used and a brief statement on the significance of this project.

## II. A Theoretical Framework

**The dependency paradigm.** Developed primarily by Latin American social scientists in the mid- and later 1960s, dependency theory constituted a powerful critique of the then prevailing North American modernization perspective as at best historically naive in its assumption that the West's path to industrialization was somehow universally valid, and at worst, as an ideological apology for the continued exploitation of the periphery of the world's poor nations by the center of the powerful capitalist economies.<sup>1</sup> The unequal nature of these international political and economic relations came to be seen by the *dependistas* as the essential form of the limits to development within the poor nations, and the term used to capture this asymmetry was "dependency," which soon came to categorize the views of a number of mostly Latin American sociologists.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The story of the rise and demise of the modernization perspective has been told a number of times. Among the early critiques are Andre Gunder Frank, "Sociology of Development and Underdevelopment of Sociology," pp. 21-94 in his *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), and Susan Budenheimer, "The Ideology of Developmentalism: American Political Science's Paradigm-Surrogate for Latin American Studies," pp. 95-137 in *The Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, volume 15 (1970). More recent assessments are found in Part One of John G. Taylor, *From Modernization to Modes of Production: A Critique of the Sociologies of Development and Underdevelopment* (London: Macmillan, 1979), and Ian Roxborough, *Theories of Underdevelopment* (London: Macmillan, 1979). Though I do not go over this ground again here, the significance of the shift from modernization to dependency as the leading perspective in development studies should not be underestimated. Roxborough notes:

Perhaps there seems to be a disproportion between the energy expended in the debate and the results achieved; a lot of heat and very little light. We sympathise with O'Brien when he says,

Dependency is undoubtedly here to stay. The basic point it makes—that the interplay between the internal Latin American structures and international structures is the critical starting point for an understanding of the process of development in Latin America—is of vital importance. But was it really necessary to write so many millions of words to establish just this perspective?

Our answer is yes, unfortunately it was necessary. The transition from one paradigm to another demands a tremendous amount of conversion. In the social sciences, themselves an arena for contending ideologies, where the simple statement of the 'obvious' becomes a direct challenge to the ideological legitimation of imperialist domination, this is even more the case.

*Ibid.*, 69. The current status of the dependency paradigm itself with respect to some recent critical perspectives will be treated later in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Among these writers must be counted Theotonio dos Santos, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Enzo Faletto, Osvaldo Sunkel, Anibal Quijano, Rui Mauro Marini and Juan Corradi. Arguably, one might want to include their precursor Andre Gunder Frank, whose conceptual focus is on "underdevelopment" and, more recently, "dependent accu-

The most sophisticated version of the dependency paradigm in my view is that of F. H. Cardoso and Enzo Faletto in *Dependency and Development in Latin America*.<sup>3</sup> The preliminary definition they offer of dependency is economic: "From the economic point of view a system is dependent when the accumulation and expansion of capital cannot find its essential dynamic component inside the system."<sup>4</sup> This formulation points to an international economic system—capitalism—within which the various nations occupy positions of qualitatively different levels of power and influence. At the center the advanced industrial nations control the key sectors of technology and finance, an advantage that shapes the special forms taken by industrialization in the periphery. It is argued that growth under these circumstances only deepens inequality. "Development" does not entail improved living standards or more representative political systems, but rather refers to a process of capital accumulation whose parameters are characterized by the dependence of the Third World on the capital and technology of the advanced industrial nations. It is thus a "dependent development."<sup>5</sup>

mulation" rather than dependency *per se*, as well as Samir Amin, who uses the term "unequal development" (as opposed to "dependent development"). In my opinion, the differences among these notational nuances turn more on points of political strategy than on theoretical issues substantial enough to warrant consideration as separate paradigms. An excellent discussion of the various ways to categorize tendencies within the dependency paradigm is given in Ronald H. Chilcote, "Dependency: A Critical Synthesis of the Literature," pp. 4-29 in *Latin American Perspectives*, volume 1 (1974), in which four currents are identified:

- 1) "the development of underdevelopment," arguing that the ties of the periphery to the center render impossible any form of development (Frank);
- 2) "the new dependency," characterized by a structuralist emphasis and open with respect to the prospects of peripheral development (dos Santos);
- 3) "dependency and development," arguing that a particular type of capitalist development can occur in certain Third World nations (Cardoso and Faletto); and
- 4) "dependency and imperialism," focusing on the detrimental effects of capitalist trade and foreign investment in the periphery (Amin, Quijano).

Even such brief categorizations indicate a family of related theoretical views, out of which different emphases emerge, as well as debates over specific points.

<sup>3</sup> Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, translated by Marjory Mattingly Urquidí (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979). The book was originally written between 1965 and 1967, and published as *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (Siglo Veintiuno Editores, SA, 1971). The English edition is an expanded and emended version of the 1971 text. Possibly because of this publishing history, many English-language discussions of dependency theory in the 1970s did not assess this work, which provides cogent answers to a number of the criticisms posed at that time.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xx.

<sup>5</sup> Cardoso and Faletto observe that

Development, in this context, means the progress of productive forces, mainly through the import of technology, capital accumulation, penetration of local economies by foreign enterprises, increasing numbers of wage-earning groups, and intensification of the social division of labor.... It is not realistic to imagine that capitalist development will solve basic problems for the majority of the population.

*Ibid.*, xxiv.

By raising the question of how to measure the ways in which external economic structures impede internal development, attention is focused on the process of class formation in Third World societies as it has been historically shaped by the process of their insertion into the world capitalist economy:

Thus the topics to be dealt with are the economic forces conditioning the world market; the structure of the national production system and the kind of linkage it has developed with the external market; the historical-structural shape of such societies, with their ways of assigning and maintaining power; and above all, the political-social movements and processes that exert pressure toward change, and their respective orientations and objectives....

... So, the *forms* adopted by dependency may vary considerably. This variation in form is expressed in the socio-political context through the size and type of the working class as well as of the bourgeoisie, the size and type of "middle class," the weight of bureaucracies, the role of the armies, forms of state, the ideologies underlying social movements, and so forth.... Historical-structural analysis illuminates the basic trends through which capital expansion occurs and finds its limits as a socio-political process. In that sense, the understanding of capitalist development requires the analyses of social classes and political context that allow or prevent the actualization of different forms and phases of capital accumulation.<sup>6</sup>

It is thus recognized that dependency assumes various forms according to time and place, giving rise to diverse processes of development and social change, and that the understanding of social change in a given country requires carefully documenting changes in class structure over time, with attention paid to the ways in which external economic forces impinge on the distribution of power internally. This passage implies also that social classes, while conditioned and created in the clash of internal with external economic structures, possess important political and ideological dimensions, which have their own impact on the further development of social structure, partly as a result of efforts by social movements to alter the nature of domination within the country.

The dependency paradigm's attention to the interaction between external structures and patterns of internal development constitutes a major breakthrough in the sociological literature, and provides the overarching framework within which I shall attempt to locate the historical experiences of development and social change in Iran. Its explanatory power is considerably enhanced by consideration of two related bodies of literature—world-system theory and modes of production

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, xx. Cf. the authors' statement on the overall object of dependency analysis: "The main theme of our essay is the relationship that exists between political struggles of groups and classes, on the one hand, and the history of economic-political structures of domination, both internal and external, on the other": *ibid.*, 177-178.

analysis—to which we now turn.

**World-system theory.** The need for a theory of the world system and its close relation to dependency have been indicated by Roxborough in *Theories of Underdevelopment*:

The central insight of the dependency theories was that it was of limited value to study the development of the societies of the Third World in isolation from the development of the advanced societies. From the point of view of the dependency theories, it was necessary to treat the world as one single system. With this as a starting point, the problem was to discover the manner in which the underdeveloped countries were inserted into the world system, and how this differentiated them from the historical pattern of development of the advanced nations.<sup>7</sup>

It is world-system theory, associated above all with the work of historical sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein on the emergence of a capitalist world economy in sixteenth-century Europe,<sup>8</sup> that moves our focus upward to the level of a global framework, within which a dependent or underdeveloped capitalism is the lot of the Third World nations.

The most striking feature of Wallerstein's account is his choice of the "world-system" as its object of analysis.<sup>9</sup> His macrosociological theory of economic change posits a set of historical developmental stages from "mini-systems" (hunting and gathering or simple agricultural societies) to "world-systems" with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems, of which there have been two kinds: first, "world-empires" (which were politically unified) and later, "world-economies" (lacking a common political system). His main subject matter is the capitalist world-economy, characterized by a single, global division of labor, in which since the sixteenth century (later in some areas, notably Asia and the Middle East), the various nation-states have become increasingly linked with each other through a market and thus can no longer be viewed as self-contained social systems. The modern world-system, dominated by a capitalist mode of production

<sup>7</sup> Roxborough, *Theories of Underdevelopment*, 42-43.

<sup>8</sup> The key works are the two published volumes of a projected four-volume history of the modern world-system, and a collection of essays on current theoretical and political problems. See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), *The Modern World-System II. Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), and *The Capitalist World Economy. Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> Morris Janowitz perceptively points out that Wallerstein "asserts that the nation-state is not the appropriate unit of analysis (I believe, incidentally, that, given his logic, he means the nation-state is not the appropriate object of analysis.):" Morris Janowitz, "A Sociological Perspective on Wallerstein," pp. 1090-1097 in *The American Journal of Sociology*, volume 82, number 5 (1977), 1091. The correct implication of this remark is that the nation-state may indeed be a unit of analysis in world-system theory.

(within which admittedly various "modes of labor control"—debt bondage, sharecropping, tenancy, and eventually mostly wage labor—were and are found), can be divided into a *core* of strong states taking the greatest part of the international economic surplus, a *periphery* of weak states that is super-exploited, and a *semiperiphery* that consists of a stratum of states exploited by the core yet able to profit vis-a-vis the periphery. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was also a relatively independent *external arena* of countries and regions that were not yet an integral part of the European world-economy, and which subsequently were incorporated into the periphery.<sup>10</sup>

The core is characterized today by high profit levels, high wages for its workers, sophisticated technology and diversified production systems, and strong states. The periphery contains countries with low profit levels, low wages for their workers, less sophisticated technologies and limited diversity of production, and weak states. The semiperiphery, in between the core and periphery on all these indices, plays the pivotal role of stabilizing the whole system politically by preventing total polarization between core and periphery. Each zone has its own economic role, class structure and mode(s) of labor control, and most significantly, unequal shares in the profits of the world's markets. Wallerstein is pessimistic in his assessment of the Third World's development prospects: some changes can occur between the core and the semiperiphery, or the semiperiphery and the periphery, especially during periods of world-wide economic crisis, but the system as a whole—divided into core, semiperiphery and periphery—does not change much, at least under capitalism.<sup>11</sup>

The world-system model has provoked a number of important criticisms since its original formulation in 1974. The most telling of these have to do with the definition of capitalism as an economic system only in terms of its exchange side, that is, markets and trade between countries; there is no equivalent importance attached to production relations, and national internal class structures. This criticism is justified, and remedied by consideration of modes of production analysis, as we shall see. But the irrefutable strengths of the world-system perspective include the need to take

<sup>10</sup> Iran under the Safavid dynasty belongs precisely in this external arena, and I shall consider the utility of this concept in Chapters Two and Three.

<sup>11</sup> Wallerstein develops this argument in the essay "Dependence in an Interdependent World: The limited possibilities of transformation within the capitalist world-economy," in *The Capitalist World Economy*.

the world-economy as the essential background framework for the study of Third World social change, and its demonstration of the utility of considering long historical periods and the various economic phases and cycles in the history of the capitalist world-economy as the framework in which dependency and development take place.<sup>12</sup> In the present case study, the emerging world-system will be treated as the ultimate parameter out of which emanated the external forces to which the Iranian state, economy and society were increasingly subjected after the sixteenth century. One of the tasks of the analysis will be to map Iran's developmental process in terms of quantitative and qualitative integration into the world-system, first as part of the external arena in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, then as a peripheral supplier of raw materials in the nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, and finally, its wavering status between the periphery and semiperiphery in the post-World War 2 period.

**Modes of production analysis.** Another solution to some of the difficulties of operationalizing the dependency paradigm, this time moving the analytic focus down to the inner workings of the Third World society and economy, has come in the form of modes of production analysis, also introduced in the 1970s.<sup>13</sup> Working definitions of the key terms "social formation" and "mode of

<sup>12</sup> Insightful critiques include Theda Skocpol, "Wallerstein's World Capitalist System: A Theoretical and Historical Critique," pp. 1075-1090 in *The American Journal of Sociology*, volume 82, number 5 (1977); Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: a Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism," pp. 25-92 in *New Left Review*, number 104 (July-August 1977); Maurice Zeitlin, *The Civil Wars in Chile (or the bourgeois revolutions that never were)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 217-37; and Daniel Garst, "Wallerstein and his Critics," pp. 469-495 in *Theory and Society*, volume 14 (1985). A summary of the various criticisms is offered by Daniel Chirot and Thomas D. Hall, "World-System Theory," pp. 81-106 in *The Annual Review of Sociology*, volume 8 (1982). The shortcomings of the perspective are not to be ignored, but I agree with the judgment of Chirot and Hall:

Studying individual societies in isolation from each other is both misleading and dangerous. It hides the powerful transnational forces that have been a major part of all social and economic transformations since the 15th century. It yields incomplete, and often wrong conclusions about the nature of social problems. Sociology has tended to fall into this kind of trap. World-system theory can thus be seen as a necessary remedy. Whether or not one agrees with all of its conclusions, it is abundantly clear that a world-wide perspective has become a minimal requirement for the intelligent study of social change.

*Ibid.*, 102. Cf. also the remark of Aidan Foster-Carter, a sophisticated advocate of modes of production analysis, that "the notion of a world system ... seems to me ... to be in some form an absolutely indispensable framework for the Marxist analysis of underdevelopment": Aidan Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," pp. 47-77 in *New Left Review*, number 107 (January-February 1978), 66. Foster-Carter is critical, however, of Wallerstein's conclusion that the capitalist world-system is governed by a single world-wide capitalist mode of production: "while Wallerstein is right to assert the existence of a world system, this is likely to be a complex whole, containing multiple modes of production (and perhaps not linking them at the level of production at all, but rather exchange": *ibid.*, 74. I will return to the relations among the dependency, world-system and modes of production perspectives in the section in this chapter on "A synthetic framework."

<sup>13</sup> The *locus classicus* of modes of production analysis lies in the "new economic anthropology" of French Marxists such as Maurice Godelier, Emmanuel Terray, and most notably, Pierre-Philippe Rey, according to Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy." These writers developed the insights of French structuralist philo-

production" can be found in the work of English sociologist John Taylor. He points out that "social formation" is the Marxist equivalent of "society as a whole," that is, society in its political, economic and socio-cultural aspects:

The concept of social formation is defined only in very general terms by Marx as comprising an economic structure (the mode of production), which he claims ultimately determines two 'superstructures'—the state and law, and ideology.

Recently—as is well known—Althusser has developed this notion, arguing that the social formation exists as a complex totality containing a number of different practices—economic, political, ideological and theoretical—whose unity constitutes what he terms 'social practice.'<sup>14</sup>

The second key term, "mode of production," is a somewhat more abstract structure, consisting of the combination of two elements: 1) a labor process (or several), referring to the way(s) in which raw materials and other inputs are worked up into products for consumption and/or exchange (that is, the setting and manner in which human beings produce their goods, for example in a factory or a small shop, on a plantation or a plot of their own, and the techniques they use to do this), and 2) a system of relations of production, denoting the social arrangement (usually in distinct social classes) through which the various labor processes are structured to yield an economic surplus (this refers to the patterns of ownership and control of the key means of production—such things as land, tools, raw materials, machinery). Each different mode of production—self-sufficient village communes, nomadic pastoralism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism and others—is organized under its own combination of labor process and relations of production.<sup>15</sup>

sophers and social scientists of the 1960s, such as Etienne Balibar, Louis Althusser and Nicos Poulantzas.

<sup>14</sup> Taylor, *From Modernization to Modes of Production*, 106.

<sup>15</sup> There is not widespread consensus on the definitions of the terms "mode of production" and "social formation," or the relations between them, as Harold Wolpe points out:

There is some considerable terminological variation in the literature. Thus, Poulantzas (1973) defines a *mode of production* as a combination of economic, political and ideological instances; by contrast some writers define a *social formation* as the combination of the economic (production relations) and the political/legal and ideological superstructure; similarly (although from a different theoretical position) Hindess and Hirst (1975) define a social formation as the mode of production together with its economic, ideological and political conditions of existence; Balibar (1970) defines the articulation of the mode of production with ideological and political instances as the *social structure* and reserves social formation for the combination of different modes of production; finally, Laclau (1977) utilises the term economic system as equivalent to Balibar's conception as well as in another way which is discussed below.

Harold Wolpe, "Introduction" to *The articulation of modes of production. Essays from Economy and Society*, edited and with an introduction by Harold Wolpe (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 42 note 2. The references are to Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (London: New Left Books, 1975); Barry Hindess and Paul Q. Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975); Etienne Balibar, "The Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism," pp. 201-208 in Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital* (London: New Left Books, 1970); and Ernesto Laclau, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin Amer-

The three structured "instances" or "practices" of a social formation (discounting the theoretical) are the economic, the political and the ideological. As these aspects of a given social formation develop and interact over time, the history of the existing mode of production is played out. Marx believed that under the capitalist mode of production the economic practice ultimately determined the broad features of social life, its dynamic setting identifiable limits on the system's expansion. Taylor argues that within other modes of production one or another of the other practices may assume more importance, as for example the political instance in the case of feudalism where the legal right of the lord to a portion of the peasant serf's surplus product was codified in the institution of ground-rent.<sup>16</sup> What this suggests for the case study of the Iranian social formation is the importance of analyzing the manner in which the surplus was allocated and appropriated in each historical period according to economic, political and/or ideological types of power and domination, and the effects of this on the nature of development and social change.

The second important insight of modes of production analysis for our purposes is its conceptualization of fundamental societal transitions such as that from feudalism to capitalism in the West, or the introduction of capitalism into pre-capitalist Third World social formations, in terms of

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ica," in his *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London: New Left Books, 1977).

As my discussion in this section will hopefully make clear, I intend to adopt a looser framework than any of these, to investigate the possibility (with Poulantzas) that a mode of production may have economic, political and ideological aspects, and (with Balibar) that a social formation may consist of several modes of production. This blurs somewhat the distinction between an abstract theoretical structure—a mode of production—and a concrete historical entity—a social formation—by allowing particular (historically concrete) politics and ideologies to be associated with general modes of production, but it also allows us to attempt to analyze the complex ways in which a given social formation at a given point in time contains economic, political and ideological elements from different modes of production, combined in a variety of relations of cooperation and conflict. For our present purposes, then, both social formations and modes of production will be conceived as possessing the three aspects.

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, *From Modernization to Modes of Production*, 111. Nicos Poulantzas suggests that "in the feudal mode of production, it is ideology in its religious form which plays the dominant role": *Political Power and Social Classes*, 15. Perry Anderson, in a far more in-depth discussion of feudalism than either Taylor or Poulantzas, notes that for Marx,

... feudalism typically involves the juridical serfdom and military protection of the peasantry by a social class of nobles, enjoying individual authority and property, and exercising an exclusive monopoly of law and private rights of justice, within a political framework of fragmented sovereignty and subordinate fiscality, and an aristocratic ideology exalting rural life.

*Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974), 407. More generally he argues:

All modes of production in class societies prior to capitalism extract surplus labor from the immediate producers by means of extra-economic coercion.... All other previous modes of exploitation operate through extra-economic sanctions—kin, customary, religious, legal or political.

*Ibid.*, 403.

... the articulation of two modes of production, one of which establishes its dominance over the other ... not as a static given, but as a *process*, that is to say a combat between the two modes of production, with the confrontations and alliances essentially between the *classes* which these modes of production define.<sup>17</sup>

This dissertation will investigate the proposition that the Iranian social formation in the sixteenth century already consisted of a combination of more than one mode of production, and that from the seventeenth century onwards with the attempted introduction of the capitalist mode of production, can be usefully analyzed as a transitional social formation in which several modes of production combined to produce a complex and changing class structure, whose particular aspects—economic, political and ideological—in their conflicts and contradictions help us account for the types of development and social change which have occurred.<sup>18</sup>

**Other useful concepts.** Two other working hypotheses can further nuance our theoretical framework: the "potential autonomy of the state" and the implications of "disorganic development." Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* contains important remarks on the first of these.<sup>19</sup> The two main schools of political sociology view the state as either the center of legitimate authority in a society (following Weber) or the center of organized coercion (following Marx). Neither treats the state as an autonomous structure, i.e.,

... a structure with a logic and interests of its own not necessarily equivalent to, or fused with, the interests of the dominant class in society or the full set of member groups in the polity.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Pierre-Philippe Rey, *Les Alliances de classes: Sur l'articulation des modes de production*, followed by *Materialisme historique et luttes de classes* (Paris: François Maspero, 1973), 15, translated and cited by Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," 56.

<sup>18</sup> Etienne Balibar has noted:

Periods of transition are therefore characterized by the *coexistence* of several modes of production.... the problems of the transition and of the forms of the transition from one mode of production to another are problems of a more general synchrony than that of the mode of production itself, englobing several systems and their relations (according to Lenin, at the beginning of the period of the transition to socialism in Russia, there were up to five coexisting modes of production, unevenly developed and organized in a hierarchy in dominance).

"Elements for a Theory of Transition," pp. 273-308 in *Reading Capital*, 307-308. A slightly different version of this passage is cited by Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," 54, who notes, interestingly enough, that the reference to Lenin is unsourced. Taylor describes his modes of production framework thus:

As opposed to the notion of underdevelopment, we shall argue that the contemporary reality it alludes to must be analysed from within historical materialism as a *social formation which is dominated by an articulation of (at least) two modes of production—a capitalist and a non-capitalist mode—in which the former is, or is becoming, increasingly dominant over the other. It is this articulation which ... contemporarily structures the social formations of the Third World.*

*From Modernization to Modes of Production*, 101 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>19</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions. A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

For Skocpol, the state is not just an "arena," it is a macro-structure, whose basis is a "set of administrative, policing and military organizations headed, and more or less well coordinated by, an executive authority."<sup>21</sup> Thus it has the latitude to occasionally act against, or at cross purposes with, dominant classes in competing for society's resources (taxes), keeping internal order and competing internationally with other states. It is this attention to the specifically political level of domination exercised by the state (and party system if there is one) that makes Skocpol's analysis so innovative, as she makes the point that Marxists would do well to supplement analyses of class relations and economic development with a look at "the strength and structure of old-regime states and the relations of state organizations to class structures."<sup>22</sup>

The role of the state in the development process, as important as it is in the advanced industrial economies,<sup>23</sup> has been even more central to the process of dependent development in the periphery, an argument which both Roxborough, and Cardoso and Faletto, suggest in their discussions of dependency.<sup>24</sup> Peter Evans views the states of the periphery and semiperiphery as one of three main actors

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>23</sup> See the analyses of, among others, James O'Connor, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973); Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," pp. 155-202 in *Politics and Society*, volume 10, number 2 (1980); John D. Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980); and Peter Evans, Dieter Rueschmeyer and Theda Skocpol, editors, *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>24</sup> In Cardoso and Faletto's *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, the role and nature of the state is treated as a fundamental variable in mediating the relationship between the local bourgeoisie and the transnational corporations. They see the state as the "natural crossroads" where the classes struggle with each other and confront the transnationals, with an increasingly important role in the development process. They thus tend toward the view of it as an "arena" of class conflict, but with Skocpol, they accord it an important analytic significance.

Roxborough has a more in-depth discussion of the state and the military in *Theories of Underdevelopment*, 118ff. He specifically raises the question: "... how can the state be 'relatively autonomous' from a social base in the ruling class and yet continue to serve the interests of that class?": *ibid.*, 118. Several lines of explanation are briefly brought to bear, such as 1) foreign as well as internal control, 2) socialization of state functionaries into the world-view of the dominant class, 3) political alliances between dominant groups and state political elites, 4) corruption and clientelism, 5) Bonapartism (or what Gramsci called Caesarism) in stalemated or transitional situations, and 6) the "widely visible" tendency of state employees to constitute themselves as a new class or as a distinct fraction of the dominant class. While Third World states appear strong and authoritarian, they tend to lack legitimacy, and their actual hold over society can be quite fragile:

Partly because of economic underdevelopment, and partly because of the incompleteness of the bourgeois revolution in these countries (springing from their dependent situation) there is very rarely a complete dominance within the power bloc of any single class or fraction. It is much more usual to find several classes or fractions sharing state power among themselves in an uneasy equilibrium. The state becomes a focus of struggle, and no class is able to develop a hegemonic position within the society as a whole.

*Ibid.*, 124. Roxborough mentions Hamza Alavi's analysis of Pakistan which argues that three social classes share state power there: see Hamza Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies," in *New Left Review*, number 74 (1972). In somewhat Weberian fashion, Roxborough considers the state as a "structured and interlocking set of institutions" potentially subject to change, but also reposing on class relations, though not rigorously—"The chains of

in the development process, which together with the transnational corporations and local capitalists form a "triple alliance" upon whose stability depends the success of dependent capitalist industrialization in a few, select Third World countries, and notably in Brazil.<sup>25</sup> This book is a highly successful application of the dependency paradigm along lines close to those set forth by Cardoso and Faletto. In twentieth-century Iran, the state's position as recipient and disbursing of vast oil revenues and the Shah's role as originator of economic policies and virtually the sole political arbiter, added to the characteristic weakness of the industrial capitalist class, combined to give the state a preeminent role in all economic, social and political development. We shall see that this has been the case historically too, as the Iranian state from Safavid times onward has aspired (sometimes more successfully, sometimes less) to be a centralizing monarchy with a great concentration of political, military and economic power. This role has involved the state intimately in most cases of social change in Iran, whether as initiator of socio-economic transformations or the target of political and social movements aimed at reform and revolution. In this dissertation an effort will be made to determine the relative weight and changing role of the state in the processes of development and social change for each period to be considered, thus arriving at an evaluation of the utility of Skocpol's leading hypotheses for a Third World case study.<sup>26</sup>

Although recent theoretical perspectives have refined the sensitivity with which the dependency paradigm can analyze the economic processes involved in Third World transitions to dependent capitalism, they have had very little to offer for the study of the political and especially the ideological "instances" and "practices" in these social formations. Phenomena such as religion, nationalism,

causality (from economy to polity) are too complex, and the causality itself is weak": *ibid.*, 120.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Evans, *Dependent Development. The Alliance of Multinational, State, and Local Capital in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

<sup>26</sup> The general principles of the model of social revolution contained in *States and Social Revolutions* include looking at "the nexes of state/state, state/economy, and state/class relationships," through analysis of:

- 1) international and world-historical circumstances;
- 2) "objective relationships and conflicts among variously situated groups and nations, rather than the interests, outlooks and ideologies of particular actors in revolutions"; and
- 3) "state organizations and their relations both to international environments and to domestic classes and economic conditions."

*States and Social Revolutions*, 291. It is evident that the positive features of the first two points are contained to a great degree within the dependency and world-system theories already presented, while the third is Skocpol's specific contribution to the analysis of development and social change.

pre-capitalist and non-capitalist cultural forms and the orientations of social movements remain undertheorized by both world-system theory and modes of production analysis,<sup>27</sup> as well as in Skocpol's work on the state and social revolutions.<sup>28</sup> One writer who has tried to theorize this dimension, A. Sivanandan, generates some intriguing insights into the nature of political cultures of resistance and opposition in the Third World within the framework of a political economic analysis of "the new world economic order," characterized by the effects of "a new industrial revolution based on micro-electronics—and a new imperialism, accelerating the "disorganic" development of the periphery."<sup>29</sup>

Sivanandan delineates the multiple effects of transnational-led development on the ways of life of the people, rural and urban, of the periphery, increasingly circumscribed by economic need, political repression and cultural disorientation:

In sum, what capitalist development has meant to the masses of these countries is production without purpose, except to stay alive; massive immiseration accompanied by a wholesale attack on the values, relationships, gods, that made such immiseration bearable; rulers who do not rule for their own people but for someone else—a development that makes no sense, has no bearing on their lives, is disorganic.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast with the "organic" connection that may be argued to exist between a capitalist economy and the mass culture and democratic politics of the center, the disorganic development of the periphery is based on a dependent capitalism lacking strong indigenous cultural mediations and mass

<sup>27</sup> On these lacunae in modes of production analysis, see Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," 77. For the corresponding critique of world-system theory, see Janowitz, "A Sociological Perspective on Wallerstein," 1093. To be fair to modes of production analysis, it should be noted that Taylor does have a theoretical place for what he calls "dislocations" among ideological, political and economic instances of the modes of production of transitional social formations, especially the non-correspondence of older ideologies and institutions (religion, the family) and politics (parties and the state) with new, capitalist economic relations:

... dislocations can only be examined by a dual reference to the structure of the pre-existing mode of production, and to the reproductive requirements of the newly emerging capitalist mode of production...

From *Modernization to Modes of Production*, 217. This is compatible with Sivanandan's notion of "disorganic development," as we shall see.

<sup>28</sup> Emphasis on the "objective relationships" at the expense of the "interests, outlooks and ideologies of particular actors" is perhaps the major weakness of Skocpol's approach in my view for understanding social change in the Third World today and in historical perspective, for it seems plausible to assume that specific political and religious cultures may play a decisive role in influencing the causes, processes and outcomes of social revolutions. Skocpol has recognized this to a certain degree, in her own discussion of, interestingly enough, Iran: "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," pp. 265-284 in *Theory and Society*, volume 11, number 3 (May 1982).

<sup>29</sup> A. Sivanandan, "Imperialism in the Silicon Age," pp. 24-42 in *Monthly Review* (July-August 1980), 25. This article was originally published in *Race and Class* (Autumn 1979).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

political legitimation. In such a situation the authoritarian nature of politics may be the most salient feature of foreign domination as it is "lived" and resistance to it often assumes forms born of "the people" rather than a specific social class or classes. Sivanandan reasons that

... the revolutions in these countries are not necessarily class, socialist, revolutions—they do not begin as such anyway. They are not even nationalist revolutions as we know them. They are mass movements with national and revolutionary components—sometimes religious, sometimes secular, often both, but always directed against the repressive political state and its imperial backers.<sup>31</sup>

Paradoxically, perhaps, this neo-Marxist approach invites us to turn our attention toward the enduring relevance of the "superstructure" of culture, ideology and world-views of peripheral social classes and political movements, areas which for the Iranian case promise to illuminate not only the revolutionary movement of the late 1970s, but also a series of earlier uprisings from the mid-nineteenth century on.

**A synthetic framework.** The central theoretical contribution of this dissertation is to indicate a solution to the problem of integrating the world-system and modes of production perspectives on underdevelopment into the dependency paradigm.<sup>32</sup> This project is best begun by building upon the efforts of two of the most perceptive commentators on these theories, Ian Roxborough and Aidan Foster-Carter, who have discussed the need for a theoretical synthesis at a level of conceptual clarity that is greater than others'.

Any analysis of development and social change in the Third World must confront the problem of how to combine the internal and external factors in a single framework. Roxborough has criticized both Andre Gunder Frank's "development of underdevelopment" model and Wallerstein's world-system theory as inadequate solutions to this problem. Frank's model of a chain of exploitative satellite/metropolis systems extending from the capitalist core to the rural hinterland of the

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>32</sup> That this integration still needs to be effected is illustrated by the lack of explicit recognition accorded by the major writers in the principal perspectives to the other bodies of literature. Thus Cardoso and Faletto, even in their 1979 edition, have no references to modes of production analysis or Wallerstein's world-system, while Wallerstein, in the 1980 second volume of *The Modern World-System* makes no mention of dependency or modes of production. Taylor's *From Modernization to Modes of Production* devotes a whole chapter to a critique of "the sociology of underdevelopment" which singles out texts by Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy and Andre Gunder Frank but has nothing to say about the further elaboration of underdevelopment theory, nor about its close relations, the dependency and world-system perspectives.

periphery tends to conflate class analysis with spatial location, while Wallerstein avoids the whole internal-external problematic by taking the world economy as his object of analysis, and the privileged locus of social change. Both focus on the production of commodities for a market as the main criterion of the capitalist mode of production, rather than the existence of labor-power as a commodity, and both lie open to "Laclau's point that participation in a world economy is not a sufficient reason to define something as capitalist."<sup>33</sup> For Roxborough,

There are two aspects of this articulation of the dependent economy with the world capitalist economic system. *Within* the social formation of the dependent country there is the articulation of the modes of production in the interior of the historically given social formation. At the level of its interconnections with the world economy, there is the articulation between the dependent economy and other economies. The two aspects are inter-related. The manner in which the economy is inserted into the world economy conditions the processes of articulation of modes of production within the social formation of the dependent country.<sup>34</sup>

Roxborough realizes there is no easy answer to the questions of relating internal to external development and choosing the most appropriate unit of analysis, "if only because the real world is neither a perfectly integrated system nor a loose collection of autonomously functioning societies."<sup>35</sup> Certainly the links between center and periphery are in part a function of the development of the center itself: "Therefore, a first step in any analysis must be a periodization of the stages of development of the center."<sup>36</sup> But one must also take the Third World nations themselves as units of analysis, to be compared and contrasted in historical perspective, as the stuff of any sociological theory of underdevelopment, "since it can reasonably be argued that at the present time these are in fact the arenas in which social classes are formed and fight out their conflicts."<sup>37</sup>

Foster-Carter's call for synthesis has been, on the one hand, for a more rigorous theory of the world-system, "constituted perhaps by relations of exchange rather than consisting of a unitary mode of production" (an implicit critique of Wallerstein), and, at the other end of the scale, for a theory of

<sup>33</sup> Roxborough, *Theories of Underdevelopment*, 52. The reference is to Ernesto Laclau, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America," *New Left Review*, number 67 (1971).

<sup>34</sup> Roxborough, *Theories of Underdevelopment*, 50.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 53. This is Wallerstein's project.

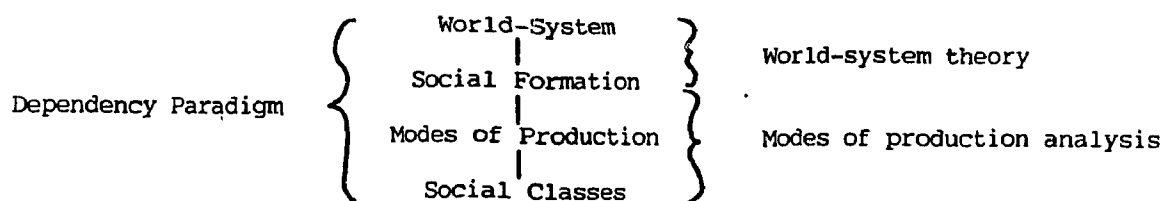
<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

what he tentatively calls the "forms of production," referring to how a surplus is extracted at the point of production and thus to the relations among social classes.<sup>38</sup> Between these units or elements of analysis at the extreme ends of the social spectrum (i.e. the world system and the workplace), Foster-Carter locates the mode or modes of production of the social formations of the Third World. The result is a hierarchy of key connections among the levels of social class, mode of production, social formation and world-system. Foster-Carter cautions:

In a loose sense, it is possible to talk (and people do) of "articulation" at any or all of these levels; but at the moment in most cases this can mean little more than a (necessary) recognition of the existence of a level of interconnection, while presupposing almost nothing about its shape or character.<sup>39</sup>

Diagram One makes explicit these insights of Roxborough and Foster-Carter, and also indicates the contribution of each of the major perspectives to a synthetic framework of analysis.

Diagram One: Levels of Articulation



This diagram suggests that the dependency paradigm provides the overarching framework for the consideration of the relation between the most encompassing external and the basic internal units of analysis—that is, the relation of the world economy to the social classes of a given Third World country. World-system theory is necessary to explain the external impulses that emanate downward from the core to the social formations of the periphery, while modes of production analysis is needed for an account of how these external pressures are mediated within the social formation itself. All three levels of analysis must be investigated and related to provide an adequate account of Third

<sup>38</sup> Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," 75. That the term "forms of production" refers essentially to class relations and the appropriation of surplus is suggested by Foster-Carter's reference to a "famous passage" of Marx:

It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers ... which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure.

Karl Marx, *Capital*, volume 3, chapter 47, cited by Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," 75-76.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

World social change and development over long periods of time.

Richard Fagen has suggested that dependency "theory" is more consistently termed an "approach to" or "way of framing" the question of underdevelopment:

Epistemologically ... dependency theory is in reality a conceptual framework, a set of concepts, hypothetical linkages, and above all an optic that attempts to locate and clarify a wide range of problems.<sup>40</sup>

Another commentator, Joseph Kahl, points out, "it tells us *how* to study history, but does not tell us specifically *what* we will find as we do so."<sup>41</sup> Thus, I shall generally adopt the term "dependency paradigm" to acknowledge its status as an overarching conceptual framework for analysis, as well as its historical precedence with respect to the emergence of world-system and modes of production analysis. My essential point in all of this is to show that the three perspectives complement one another, and secondly, that the modes of production and world-system perspectives are of great help for the problem of how to *operationalize* the dependency paradigm.

Rather than a general theory of world-wide development and social change, then, we have a paradigm, or framework, that requires the researcher to pursue the historically specific processes of class formation and articulation of modes of production in a given social formation under the pressures of particular conjunctures of the world economy. The dependency paradigm is thus not strictly speaking falsifiable. Gary Gereffi suggests that the appropriate standard for judging is its utility in research, or its reliability:

The relevant question becomes: To what extent do given socio-historical configurations effectively distinguish and allow one to compare important recurring patterns of behavior across a variety of societies? Judged on these grounds, the notion of situations of dependency has proven its worth. It has highlighted a range of significant patterns of dependency across time and space, emphasizing the complex linkages between internal and external interests—and social, political, and economic ones—related to the expansion of capitalism on the periphery of the world system.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Fagen, "Studying Latin American Politics: Some Implications of a Dependencia Approach," in *Latin American Perspectives*, volume XII, number 2 (1977), 7.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Kahl, *Modernization, Exploitation and Dependency in Latin America: Germani, Gonzalez Casanova and Cardoso* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1976), 176.

<sup>42</sup> Gary A. Gereffi, *The Pharmaceutical Industry and Dependency in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 41.

Theoretical work must be informed and advanced by solid case studies that are not imprisoned inside one or another of the several perspectives, but rather draw intelligently on all of them, in the process providing a basis for the evaluation of their merits and deficiencies. Only in this way can our knowledge of the Third World be improved, and it is only through such case studies that a better integration of the theories can be effected.

### III. Methodological Considerations

**Comparative-historical method.** This dissertation is a work of historical sociology, and will draw upon the logic of comparative method to a certain degree to arrive at its substantive conclusions. In both respects—and it could be argued that the two are really but one comparative-historical method—Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* provides a model. Skocpol calls her methodology "comparative-historical analysis," appropriate in research projects where a complex object of study presents "too many variables and not enough cases," such as, in her work, the comparison of the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions, or in my own, instances of social change in Iran. Its principles go back to John Stuart Mill, who developed both a "Method of Agreement" that suggested if several cases have the same general outcome a common cause may be hypothesized, and a "Method of Difference" to provide contrasts with cases where the given outcome and cause are absent but which are in other ways significantly similar to the positive cases uncovered by the Method of Agreement.<sup>43</sup> Thus the successful social revolutions of France, Russia and China can be compared among themselves in the search for structural constants and usefully contrasted with unsuccessful social revolutions (Germany in 1848, early twentieth-century China) and non-violent social transformations (the Industrial Revolution in England and the aftermath of the Japanese Meiji Restoration).

In the present study the logic of comparative-historical method will be used in two ways, both of which will help evaluate the manner in which key theoretical variables—world-system, situations

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<sup>43</sup> Skocpol's discussion of Mill is found in her section on "A Comparative Historical Method," in *States and Social Revolutions*, 33-40.

of dependency, modes of production, the potential autonomy of the state, and cultures of legitimation and opposition—affected the social structures and processes of change in each of several historical periods. Firstly, for each period to be studied, the relevant comparisons of Iran with other countries will be briefly considered. Thus, for example, for the period from 1500 to 1800 the modes of production in the Safavid social formation will be compared and contrasted with those in the Mughal and Ottoman empires to allow entry into the debate on pre-capitalist modes of production. For the nineteenth century the semi-colonial status of Iran and its degree of dependency can be compared and contrasted with situations in Egypt, Turkey and India. And in the twentieth century, comparisons and contrasts can be drawn with the cases of other large Middle Eastern and Islamic societies (Turkey, Egypt), significant semiperipheral countries (such as oil-rich Mexico and industrialized Brazil), and another Third World nation that underwent a social revolution in the same year as Iran (Nicaragua). Each of the other cases will help sort out what was unique to the Iranian situation, and what seems structurally similar about it with the Middle East, the Islamic world, the semiperiphery, or the Third World.

Secondly, and most importantly, the logic of comparative-historical method will be turned upon a single country, Iran, which experienced social change in several historical epochs, to determine the ways in which such factors as the changing world-system, situations of dependency, and internal modes of production have affected the kinds of social change which have occurred in Iran over time. Thus, although the greater portion of the study is devoted to instances of social change from the late nineteenth century to the present, the early chapters on social change in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries will help us assess the degree to which the key variables indeed set the parameters of social change in Iran in a particular manner by the twentieth century. And careful comparisons of various periods within the twentieth century will highlight the importance of a nuanced and detailed consideration of the changing forms and circumstances of such concepts as dependency, cultures of opposition and the state, and their impact on the types of social movements that Iranians have engaged in.

**Dialectical methodology.** Operationalizing the theoretical perspectives that have been outlined above for the case study of development and social change in Iran requires a methodology which is dialectical as well as comparative-historical. The particular form of dialectic I have in mind is one which would locate the causes, processes and outcomes of the various instances of social change in the tensions and contradictions produced by the ways in which objective relations of dependence on foreign capital and internal state domination of society impinge on the material and spiritual well-being of the several groups and social classes who must "live" them within the everyday context of their own cultural and political orientations. This dialectic between subject and object has a long history in philosophy, from Hegel and Marx to Lukács and Sartre, much of which appears relevant to the task of incorporating it as a method in sociology today. In "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," Marx offered the oft-cited but profoundly ambiguous formulation:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.<sup>44</sup>

Both Marx and Sartre argue for a structural and historical approach to the study of any human activity, an approach which is dialectical in that it views the world in both a structural dimension and in a practical, historical dimension, where human beings, as individuals and as potentially conscious class actors, have important (and perhaps decisive) roles to play.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *Selected Writings*, edited by David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 300. Various interpretations of the relative weights of the two central clauses of this statement have been advanced, particularly among European neo-Marxists, with the structuralists (notably Althusser and Poulantzas) laying heavy stress on the determination of the prior conditions (if only in the famous "final instance"), and existentialist, humanist and historicist Marxists (especially Sartre and E.P. Thompson) trying to recapture the moment of human agency in the historical process. I side with the latter theorists in this debate, who offer a more balanced view of this fundamental dilemma.

<sup>45</sup> Sartre has put it this way:

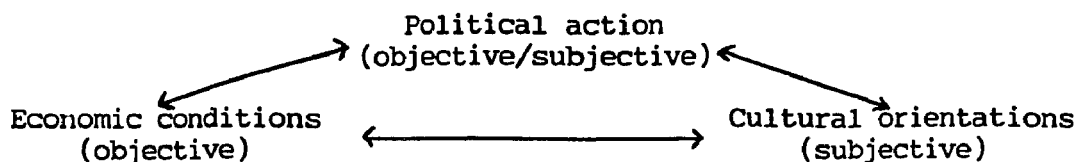
If one wants to grant Marxist thought its full complexity, one would have to say that man in a period of exploitation is *at once both* the product of his own product and an historical agent who can under no circumstances be taken as a product. This contradiction is not fixed; it must be grasped in the very moment of *praxis*. Then it will clarify Engels's statement: men make their own history on the basis of real, prior conditions, but it is *the men* who make it and not the prior conditions. Otherwise men would be merely the vehicles of inhuman forces which through them would govern the social world. To be sure, these conditions exist, and it is they, they alone, which can furnish a direction and a material reality to the changes which are in preparation; but the movement of human *praxis* goes beyond them while conserving them.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage, 1963), 87. Similarly, Cardoso and Faletto see social structure in dialectical terms:

In other words our approach should bring to the forefront both aspects of social structures: the mechanisms of self-perpetuation and the possibilities for change. Social structures impose limits on social processes and reiterate established forms of behavior. However, they also generate con-

Another way to conceptualize a dialectical method of analysis capable of linking the several theories of underdevelopment with the insights of Sivanandan on the politics of resistance to disorganic development is indicated by Diagram Two, based on the three "levels of analysis" suggested by the modes of production approach.

Diagram Two: Levels of Analysis



No strict hierarchy is intended by this diagram: links and connections among each of these levels can be hypothesized and studied, but the theoretical questions of cause and effect relations have not been satisfactorily resolved in the present state of development studies. Indeed, there are probably not any universally valid answers to such questions; as Roxborough observes with respect to classes: "Very few useful statements can be made about the political orientations of any social class or aggregate in a vacuum: only by situating the analysis in a specific historical context can we begin to make reasonable statements about behavior."<sup>46</sup>

The present research on social change in Iran rests on the hypothesis that the revolution and other instances of social change will remain incomprehensible if one ignores *either* the "objective"

traditions and social tensions, opening the possibilities for social movements and ideologies of change. The analyses have to make explicit not only structural constraints that reinforce the reiterative aspects of the reproduction of society, but also have to delineate chances for change, rooted in the very social interests and ideologies created by the development of a given structure. In this process, subordinated social groups and classes, as well as dominated countries, try to counterattack dominant interests that sustain structures of domination.

Cardoso and Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, xi.

<sup>46</sup> Roxborough, *Theories of Underdevelopment*, 82. Elsewhere he notes:

... class is a relationship between two sets of people. It is a way of behaving which characterises social aggregates. As such it is embodied in institutions and is formed historically.... The basis of class relations are the relations between men in the productive process.... The ways in which men respond to this structured manner of producing material goods constitute class relations.

... the same class situation (that is, the 'objective' relations of production) can give quite distinct forms of class practice and class consciousness. Classes *are* these forms of historically constituted social practice and shared feelings and perceptions. One is not more 'subjective' or 'objective' than the other. Class, class action and class consciousness are simply different facets of a single, if complex, social relationship.

*Ibid.*, 70.

social and economic changes that were occurring in Iran or the "subjective" ways in which groups and classes had to live through them as threats to their social and psychological identities. The dissertation will explore this cross-tension between structures of social and economic organization and processes of collective response to them filtered through the shared political and cultural world-views of various groups and classes in Iranian society. In so doing, it is hoped to give some indication of the utility of a dialectical methodology for empirical social science.

#### **IV. The Case of Iran**

**Overview of this study.** My original interest in the study of development and social change in Iran arose from a desire to shed light on the causes of the revolution of 1978-79. In the course of a preliminary investigation of the processes of dependent capitalist development during the reign of the ex-Shah (especially from 1953 to 1979), it gradually became clear to me that the social forces which emerged and the various religious and political cultures and experiences on which they drew to make the revolution, could not be adequately understood without extensive historical and sociological knowledge of the patterns of social change which had occurred and recurred in Iran, especially from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on. Further consideration of the problems involved suggested that it would be illuminating to research the entire (modern era) history of the West's impact on Iranian social structure and its processes of change, broadly conceived as both long-term phenomena such as the rise and fall of the Safavid tribal state from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and political and social movements such as the Tobacco Rebellion of 1891, the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911, Reza Khan's coup d'etat in 1921, separatist movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan in 1945-46, the Mussadiq oil nationalization struggle and Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi's coup d'etat in 1951-53 and, of course, the recent revolution.

The dissertation is divided into three parts, corresponding to the three long phases in the relationship of Iran with the West. Part One is a study of pre-capitalist Iran's first sustained contact with the West, in the period from 1500 to 1800, roughly coterminous with the reign of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722). In this first part, Chapter Two sets the stage by addressing the nature of

Iranian society in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, before significant political and economic contact with the West had occurred. Chapter Three then examines the relationship between the rise of trade with England and Holland in the seventeenth century and the chaotic social conflict of the eighteenth century, which saw the fall of the Safavids to Afghan tribesmen in 1722 followed by seven decades of civil war among Iranian tribal groups.

Part Two covers what might be termed the crossing of the threshold of dependency in the period from 1800 to 1925, corresponding to the rule of the Qajar dynasty. Chapter Four traces the web of political and economic ties that linked Iran with Tsarist Russia and imperial England in the course of the nineteenth century, and the impact of these on Iranian social structure. Chapter Five looks at the social movements against the Qajar state and foreign powers that resulted in political stalemate and economic dislocation, and ultimately in the rise to power of Reza Khan (Pahlavi) in 1921-25.

Part Three analyzes the new phase of petroleum-based capitalist development from the post-1925 period to the present, a period which saw the rise and fall of the Pahlavi dynasty. The major topics covered during this period consist of: the autocratic capitalism imposed by the ex-Shah's father, Reza Shah Pahlavi, from 1921 to 1941 (Chapter Six); the separatist and nationalist movements of the immediate post-World War 2 years, especially the oil nationalization struggle led by Prime Minister Mussadiq that ended in the CIA-backed "countercoup" of August 1953 (Chapter Seven); the rise of American influence in Iran and the consolidation of dependent capitalism under Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in the 1950s and 1960s (Chapter Eight); the political and economic changes due to oil-led development in the 1970s and the articulation of several distinct cultures of opposition as the crucial background to a discussion of the making of the revolution in 1977-79 focusing on its root causes, unfolding form and content, and the major social actors and ideologies involved (Chapter Nine); and a conclusion drawing up a balance sheet on the nature and extent of development and social change in Iran from 1501 to 1979 in terms of the theoretical perspectives and empirical analysis of the dissertation as a whole.

For each period covered the questions to be investigated will include: what mode(s) of production operated in the Iranian social formation, in terms of economic, political and ideological considerations? What was the nature and role of the state, especially as these affected development and social change? What was the quantitative and qualitative nature of Iran's relations with the West? What changes occurred in social structure, and to what degree were these the products of internal and external dynamics of development? What forms did social change take? With respect to each of the social movements to be studied, what groups and classes participated, with what forms of organization and ideology, and what were the outcomes? Finally, how can one evaluate the internal and external causal factors in each instance of social change, and what were the consequences for further efforts to develop?

**Sources.** This study of social structure and social change in Iran from 1500 to 1979 is based for the most part on secondary, and to some extent on primary, sources and materials. In addition to several fine comprehensive works, notably those of Nikki Keddie and Ervand Abrahamian,<sup>47</sup> there exists a rich and growing body of secondary historical and social science literature covering many aspects and periods of the topics I shall be treating. This literature—articles, books and dissertations in English, French, German, Russian, Italian and Persian—constitutes the foundations of my own research effort and shall be comprehensively drawn on and deployed in the pages that follow. The most extensive segment of this literature is in English, and an in-depth survey of the relevant secondary historiography and social science literature has been undertaken. Next in quality and compass come the French and German scholarship, which have been incorporated where possible (especially the French literature). Russian and Italian works have been consulted in translation (to English or Persian), and a special effort has been made to make use of the findings of Soviet historians and social scientists in this way.<sup>48</sup> The research conducted here is also based upon a close look at a handful of the most important secondary materials in Persian, and in particular, twentieth-century

<sup>47</sup> These are Nikki Keddie, *Roots of Revolution. An Interpretive History of Modern Iran*, with a section by Yann Richard (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), and Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

<sup>48</sup> A good recent overview of these various national traditions of work on Iran is the special issue of *Iranian Studies*, volume XX, numbers 2-4 (1987), on "Iranian Studies in Europe and Japan."

histories of the period from 1800 to 1925 enhance the analysis in Part Two.

There is also a wide range of primary sources available for the study of social change in Iran, and those which have been published are tapped as much as possible, for evaluating the secondary treatments and filling in some of the gaps in that literature. For the period from 1500 to 1800 (Part One), there are a number of travellers' accounts in the European languages, court-commissioned chronicles and histories in Persian (of which a very important one is available in English), and a valuable Safavid administration manual from the 1720s (also translated to English).<sup>49</sup> Paintings (Persian miniatures) from this period can also be studied for a view of the Iranian court and its culture. For the period from 1800 to 1925 (Part Two) there is the extremely important collection of documents edited by Charles Issawi, containing a wealth of political, social and economic data, both qualitative and quantitative, in the form of consular reports and observations by Iranian, English, Russian, French, German, Italian and other contemporaries.<sup>50</sup> There are in addition published collections of documents pertaining to the Constitutional Revolution in English and Persian, containing newspaper articles, government orders and decrees, and the proceedings and speeches of the National Assembly. For the contemporary period from 1925 to the present (Part Three) there are readily available documents in Persian and English pertaining to the leading revolutionary figures and organizations (pamphlets, speeches, books and articles). There are also important Iranian census data, some published U.S. government documents, and the Harvard holdings of the Iranian Oral History Collection. Finally, newspaper coverage of the revolution and the present government yields much useful information, especially *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Kayhan* and *Ittila'at*, as well as the newspapers and periodicals of a variety of religious and secular opposition groups. I have selectively examined some of these materials. The challenge is to fashion a coherent account out of this mass of raw, or partly processed, data in a

<sup>49</sup> The chronicle in question is Eskandar Beg Monshi's *Tarikh-i 'Alam-ara-yi 'Abbasi* (History of Shah 'Abbas the Great), translated by Roger M. Savory in two volumes (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978); the administrative manual is by an anonymous author, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk. A Manual of Safavid Administration (circa 1137/1725)*, translated and explained by Vladimir Minorsky (London: Luzac, 1943). Some of the travellers' accounts include Bernier (1710), Chardin (1811), Francklin (1790), Fryer (1915), Hanway (1753, 1754), Herbert (1634), Jenkinson (1886), Krusinski (1740), du Mans (1890), Olearius (1727), Tavernier (1677) and Thévenot (1687).

<sup>50</sup> Charles Issawi, editor, *The Economic History of Iran: 1800-1914* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971).

manner sensitive to the biases— ideological, theoretical and cultural—inherent in it.

**Significance of this study.** As outlined in this chapter, the present study aims at a critical synthesis of the topic of development and social change in Iran, and attempts to go beyond the current state of the literature in several ways. From a theoretical point of view, no recent study has used a dependency perspective to analyze development and social change in Iran;<sup>51</sup> a major theoretical task of this dissertation is precisely to establish the validity of this perspective for a non-Latin American society, as well as to provide a case study drawing on world-system theory and modes of production analysis, of which there are as yet only a handful.<sup>52</sup> It should also be noted that most writing on Iran falls short of providing an in-depth study of what I have termed the subjective and objective moments of analysis. The best Marxist work, Fred Halliday's *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*,<sup>53</sup> is symptomatically limited in its treatment of the religious dimension of opposition; most studies of the revolution to date can be classified as either political economic in intent, or descriptions of the ideologies and politics of the main actors. The better ones, of course, try to bring these dimensions together, but the results so far have not been entirely satisfactory in drawing together all the connections into a well-integrated analysis.

<sup>51</sup> Bizhan Jazani, a founding member of the left-wing Organization of Iranian People's Fada'i Guerrillas, wrote a study of Iran while in prison entitled *Iran ... The Socio-Economic Analysis of a Dependent Capitalist State*, translated by the Iran Committee (London: The Iran Committee, no date; originally published clandestinely in Iran in 1973). Later "killed while attempting to escape," Jazani's prison writings have been gathered and published as *Capitalism and Revolution in Iran. Selected Writings of Bizhan Jazani*, translated by the Iran Committee (London: Zed Press, 1980). A number of dissertations by Iranian scholars have been written dealing with the 1953-78 period in terms of some form of dependency. Some of these are mentioned and discussed in Chapter Eight.

The best overview of contemporary Iranian history, Nikki Keddie's *Roots of Revolution* explicitly disavows a theoretical relationship to the dependency paradigm, when describing the

... big showy projects, supersophisticated and expensive weapons, and fancy consumer goods, all of which put Iran in a position of long-term dependence on Western countries, especially the United States, and which were profitable to American companies. ("Dependency" here is a relative concept, unconnected with Dependency Theory, which underestimates the possibility of independent action by the Third World).

*Ibid.*, 144. Her historical analysis is nonetheless fairly close to the dependency perspective, of whose most able practitioners, such as Cardoso and Faletto, she seems unaware.

<sup>52</sup> World-system theory has been applied to Turkey by Caglar Keyder, *The Definition of a Peripheral Economy: Turkey, 1923-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), and there is an ongoing research project on the Ottoman Empire by the journal *Review* and the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations at the State University of New York, Binghamton: see Reşat Kasaba, "Incorporation of the Ottoman Empire, 1750-1820," pp. 805-847 in *Review*, volume X, numbers 5/6 (Summer-Fall 1987).

Modes of production analysts to date have focused almost exclusively on Africa. There is also a book by Ken Post on Jamaica, a projected book on Indonesia by John Taylor, and some work on India, such as Jagannath Pathy, "An Outline of Modes of Production in 'Tribal India'," pp. 23-48 in Buddhadeb Chaudhuri, editor, *Tribal Development in India. Problems and Prospects*, (Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1982).

<sup>53</sup> Fred Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979).

From an empirical standpoint, there is no single work covering the whole period from 1500 to the present; most contemporary histories begin ca. 1800, while others attempt to cover all of Iranian history from the sixth century B.C. in necessarily summary fashion. It is hoped that this study will establish the utility of using the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a baseline for an understanding of the central role played by dependency in the shaping of social change in Iran up to the present. The coming years too will probably witness momentous events for the future of social change and development in Iran, such as the resolution of the Iran-Iraq war, the definition of an economic model, and eventually the difficult test of the transition to a post-Khumaini state. It is my hope that the elaboration of a framework of analysis that is sociologically and historically somewhat broader than has hitherto been achieved will contribute to the ongoing challenge of understanding social change in post-revolutionary Iran.

**Part One**  
**Social Structure and Social Change**  
**in Pre-Capitalist Iran, 1500-1800**

## Introduction to Part One

“What Iran was, in terms of fundamental social structure, before the West intruded, and what Iranian society has become today—these are questions for which even a careful student may not find satisfactory answers.”<sup>1</sup> These words, only slightly less true today than when they were written in another dissertation in 1955, pose the question which will preoccupy us in Part One of this dissertation. The researcher today has the very real advantage of more than thirty years of efforts by historians working on this or that aspect of Iranian society in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, but the task remains one of trying to assemble a vast puzzle with some pieces missing and others that do not quite fit. The goal of this first part is to uncover the basic configurations of the Iranian social formation in the period of the Safavid dynasty, which ruled Iran from 1501 to 1722, and then to relate this social structure to the social changes that occurred during and after its reign, through the tumultuous changes of dynasty that punctuated the eighteenth century, until another durable, and yet fundamentally weaker dynasty—the Qajars—seized power on the threshold of the nineteenth century.

Chapter Two is devoted to a careful empirical and theoretical analysis of Safavid social structure at the height of the dynasty's power, circa 1630, just after the death of Iran's most illustrious ruler, Shah 'Abbas. After a brief introduction on the history of the Safavids' rise to power and the most important developments through the 1620s, the heart of the chapter examines the nature of the Safavid state and the three major economic sectors of the Iranian social formation—tribal pastoralists, sedentary agriculturalists and urban guild producers. The nature and extent of Iran's newly emerging relations with the nascent European capitalist world-economy from 1500 to 1630 are discussed here in the context of Iran's international trade. The empirical picture is rounded out with a look at some

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<sup>1</sup> Nikki Keddie, “The Impact of the West on Iranian Social History,” Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of California, Berkeley (1955), 1. Nikki Keddie would subsequently go on to become one of the foremost historians of Iran writing in the English language.

key ideological and political aspects of the seventeenth-century Iranian social formation, focussing in particular on the legitimization efforts of the monarchy and its relations with the religious specialists of the ulama, but also introducing such orientations of the social orders below as can be discerned. The chapter closes by situating the data with respect to the ongoing debate on the mode of production in pre-capitalist Iran, arguing for a *modes of production* solution to the problem.

Chapter Three then turns our attention to the contours of social change in Iran from 1500 to 1800. Here the varieties of social change under the Safavids are first identified, and then the dynastic revolutions of the eighteenth century are assessed in terms of the internal dynamics of the social formation and the role played by the growth in commercial relations with the West during the Safavid period. A second axis of explanation revolves around the weight to be accorded to all of these structural factors vis-a-vis the notoriously inadequate personal characteristics of the later Safavid shahs. Only by raising such questions in light of careful examination of Iranian society on its own terms during this early period of Iran's relations with the West can a baseline be established against which later instances of social change will hopefully disclose a richer significance.

## Chapter Two

### The Iranian Social Formation, ca. 1630

Comment peut-on être Persan?

—Montesquieu, *Lettres Persanes*, 1721

"How can one be Persian?" The present chapter attempts to sketch the broad outlines of a basis for answering Montesquieu's question, by a look at the social structure of Iran in the first half of the seventeenth century. The date, "circa 1630," derives its significance from the fact that the Safavid empire is generally acknowledged to have reached its zenith under Shah 'Abbas, who ruled Iran from 1587 to 1629. The account which follows draws on Iranian and European sources from throughout the seventeenth century, as well as the modern secondary historiography, to provide an overview of the basic economic, political and ideological structures of the Iranian social formation at this "point" in time. This society, like any other, possessed developmental tendencies, such that it was not the same as the Safavid Iran of the early sixteenth or early eighteenth centuries, and thus a preliminary task is to briefly trace its evolution to the 1620s, the period which concerns us here.

#### I. The Historical Evolution of Safavid Iran to the 1620s

Though its continuity with earlier dynasties that ruled Iran has occasionally been remarked by historians,<sup>1</sup> the rise of the Safavid dynasty to power can also be considered the opening moment in

<sup>1</sup> The continuity thesis, which has been advanced by such distinguished scholars as Vladimir Minorsky, I. P. Petrushevsky and Jean Aubin, is based on early Safavid (ca. 1500-1550) socio-economic similarity with previous tribal dynasties. Petrushevsky finds that there was no revolution in economic structure when the first Safavids came to power, and no change in fiscal policy: see Jean Aubin, "Études Safavides. I. Šāh Ismā'īl et les Notables de l'Iraq Persan," pp. 37-81 in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Middle East*, volume II, part I (January 1959), 50-51, citing I. P. Petrushevsky, *Očerki po istorii feodal'nykh otnoshenii v Azerbaidzhane i Armenii v XVI- nachale XIX vekov* (Leningrad, 1949). This is backed by Aubin's own findings on the stability of social structure, the basic thesis being that while the Turcoman tribes brought the Safavids to power, the hereditary aristocracy of Iran remained in place, finding this fairly easy in "a religious movement without social content and a state without a political tradition": *ibid.*, 78. Alessandro Bausani feels that until 'Abbas I, "the Safavids failed to

the modern history of Iran, for two important reasons. Before 1501, and since the seventh-century Arab conquest, Iran had generally either been part of some larger empire, or had been splintered into a number of smaller dynasties; and secondly, the proclamation of Shi'ism as the new state religion came to sharply demarcate Iran from its Sunni neighbors, the Ottoman, Mughal and Uzbek empires in Turkey, the Arab world, India and Central Asia.<sup>2</sup>

The Safavids' name and origin can be traced to an early fourteenth-century Sufi *shaykh* (holy man) named Safi, who established a base in the northwestern town of Ardabil. His successors gradually attracted significant numbers of devoted followers, especially from among the Turcoman tribes of the Anatolian plateau to the West.<sup>3</sup> Around 1450 the Safavid order was transformed into a militant Shi'i movement based on the semi-divinization of its leader, Junaid, who mobilized his tribal disciples for religious conquest (*ghaza*) against Christians in Trabzon on the Black Sea and in Georgia. When Junaid fell in battle, this policy was continued by his son Haidar who died fighting in the Caucasus in 1488. Haidar's troops became known as the *qizilbash* (Ottoman Turkish for "red head") because of the scarlet headgear they wore, with twelve gores (triangular pieces) representing the twelve Shi'i imams. Haidar's young son Isma'il went into hiding, waiting for a propitious moment to make his bid for political power in northwest Iran.<sup>4</sup>

introduce any innovations in the economy or the agricultural condition of the country': *The Persians. From the earliest days to the twentieth century*, translated from the Italian by J. B. Donne (London: Elek Books, 1971), 142.

These observations thus throw into relief both the religious and territorial changes of the first decade of Safavid rule, and 'Abbas's later political economic reforms, to which we shall return.

<sup>2</sup> Judgments to this effect can be found in Roger Savory, "Safavid Persia," pp. 394-429 in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 1, *The Central Islamic Lands*, edited by P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 398-99. See also Amin Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia at Its Zenith," pp. 83-116 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XI (1978), 83-84, for comments both on the significance of the Safavids' rise and a certain "fundamental continuity" with previous periods.

<sup>3</sup> The best study of this early period is Michel M. Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Şafawids. Şi'ism, Şufism and the Gulat*, Freiburger Islamstudien, volume III (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1972). The popular appeal of mystical Sufism to the Anatolian masses, largely outside the debate between Shi'is and Sunnis, is nicely captured:

In fact, there was something else that was drawing the common man away from the controversial arguments of the scholars, something which sounded more understandable to him, something that had less to do with dogmatic beliefs and more with the real wonders of his life. For around him, in almost every town and city there was a "holy man", a Şūfī saint, who could perform miracles or do actions which to the common man appeared truly amazing. This saint was attracting people away from the difficult and exacting problems of Islam the religion and, through local meetings, gatherings, repetitive prayers, simple monotonous singing, and even mass hysteria, the pious saint won those people's hearts with the promise of attaining the final stage of communion with God in a state of utter and supreme ecstasy.

*Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>4</sup> The transformation of the Safavid order from 1450 onwards is recounted in Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the*

The 1490s were marked by severe succession struggles in the Aq Quyunlu dynasty, the Turcoman tribal confederation which had held much of Iran since 1468. The contemporary chronicler Qazvini describes the deterioration of the political situation: "... when the Aq-qoyunlu state became weak, confusion reigned in the Iranian lands ... and plunder and raids became prominent, and the affairs of the world lost order and organization."<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1500 Isma'il began to assemble a force of several thousand disciples and sufis of the various Turcoman clans. Isma'il's army won battles in Shirvan and at Baku in the Caucasus at the end of 1500, and then early in 1501 the Aq Quyunlu forces of Alvand were shattered at Sharur. This opened the way for Isma'il's coronation at Tabriz, the capital, and the declaration of Ithna 'Ashari (Twelver) Shi'ism as state religion in the summer of 1501.<sup>6</sup>

*Şafawids*, 72ff., and in Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam. Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 77ff., both of whom see the attempt to associate the new type of Safavid leader with the *mahdi* (or Hidden Imam) sent by God at the end of the world (and thus the shift to Shi'ism) as calculated to bring the Safavids to political power.

<sup>5</sup> Yahya Qazvini, *Lubb al-tawarikh* (Tehran, 1932), 240, quoted in Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Şafawids*, 80. The extremely fragmented nature of Iranian territory ca. 1500 is well captured by Bausani:

At the turn of the sixteenth century, Iran was in part governed by various Aq-qoyunlu rulers. Prince Alvand held sway in Azerbaijan and Armenia, while Sultān Murād ruled over Persian Iraq. In Fārs, Yazd, Kirmān, Arabian Iraq, and Diyarbekir, there were other Aq-qoyunlu princes, who were independent of Sultān Murād. Khūzistān was governed by the Shi'ite Arab dynasty of the Musha'sha'. Abarkūh, Kāshān, Semnān and Sīstān all had local rulers, while Māzandarān was divided up between nearly a dozen princelings. In Gīlān there were two amirates or khānates, Lāhijān and Rasht, and Talish also formed an independent khānate. In the east, Khorāsān, including roughly present-day Afghanistan and southern Turkestan, was governed by the Timurid Sultān Husayn Bāiqarā (1469-1506) from Herāt, while Balkh and Qandahār were ruled by local princes independent of Herāt. Nearly all of these 'states' then had their vassals who were governors of whole provinces.

*The Persians*, 135. To identify most of the cities and regions named here and in the text, the reader is referred to maps 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 in Appendix II.

<sup>6</sup> These events are recounted in Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Şafawids*, 81-82, and in Roger Savory, *Iran under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 24-26. Isma'il's extremist claims, which varied from divine descent to divinity itself, can be adduced from his poetry, written in Turcoman Turkish: see Vladimir Minor-sky, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismā'īl I," pp. 1006a-1053a in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, volume X (1940-42). A chronicle of the time reports that when Isma'il rose in Anatolia, "Leaflets announcing to those expecting the appearance of that Majesty [i.e. Isma'il] who is the prelude to the appearance of the Lord of the Age were disseminated in every direction": cited in Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 80.

The length and depth of the conversion process from Sunnism to Shi'ism is a matter of some dispute. Lambton, following Aubin's "La politique religieuse des Şafavides," pp. 235-244 in *Le Shi'isme imāmīte* (Paris, 1970), feels that conversion to Shi'ism "by the masses seems to have been fairly widespread and rapid, but its acceptance by the notables and 'ulama' was slower and more reluctant": see Ann K.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam. An Introduction to Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (London: Oxford University Press, 1981), 266. Despite confiscations and repression which caused many leading Sunni *ulama* (religious professionals) to migrate to India and elsewhere, substantial pockets of Sunnis remained in Iran, in the Caucasus, Kurdistan and Khurasan: see Jean Aubin, "Les Sunnites du Lārestān et la chute des safavides," pp. 151-171 in *Revue des études islamiques*, volume XXXIII (1965), 151. The political consequences of Iran's eventual conversion to Shi'ism are underlined by Bausani:

Religious unity—even if imposed under duress—turned the Persian population into an actual 'people' in the only way possible at the time, by uniting them under common religious laws and dogmas which effectively isolated them from their neighbours.... In a way that had never happened

Between 1503 and 1510 the Safavid tribal army scored a series of victories that consolidated its territorial hold over virtually all of Iran, from the Caspian provinces in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south, and from Baghdad in the west to Khurasan in the east. This phenomenal expansion was checked only by the power of the Ottoman army at Chaldiran in 1514. The defeat undermined Isma'il's claims to invincibility, but neither could the Ottomans build upon it to annex Iran or roll back Shi'ism, and thus this setback paradoxically consolidated Iran as Safavid and Shi'i.<sup>7</sup>

Isma'il never personally took the field again until his death in 1524, and the bases of Safavid legitimacy shifted perceptibly away from theocracy to "ordinary" bureaucratic-monarchic conceptions.<sup>8</sup>

When Isma'il's son Tahmasp became shah in 1524 he was only ten years old. The qizilbash chiefs of the Turcoman clans engaged in what amounted to a civil war from 1524 to 1533, during which several attempts were made to seize control of the state. This internal chaos was compounded by invasions of Khurasan in the east by the Uzbeks (who were defeated at Jam in 1528) and then by the Ottomans who took Baghdad, Tabriz, Hamadan and reached Sultaniyeh in the west in 1534-35, before ultimately being turned back by scorched earth tactics and the onset of a bitter winter.<sup>9</sup> Tahmasp assumed effective control of the state about this time, and consolidated the Safavid empire by ruling altogether for over fifty years until 1576. He attempted to balance the powerful tribes, dividing key provincial governorships among them and also using native Iranian bureaucratic families in his administration, as well as introducing Georgians into a few state positions, taken from among the

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before (for the *shī'a/sunna* division had not been a geographical one, but was founded on groups, centres, classes), the unity of the political world of Islam had been shattered.

*The Persians*, 139-140.

<sup>7</sup> This argument is advanced by Hafez F. Farmayan, *The Beginnings of Modernization in Iran. The Policies and Reforms of Shah Abbas I (1587-1629)*, Middle East Center research monograph number 1 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1969), 5. Mazzaoui makes an interesting argument that "although the Ottoman Sultān Selīm delivered a crushing blow to the newly founded Šafawid state at the battle of Čaldiran in 1514 and could perhaps have put an end to the newly established Šī'i state, still he found he had to turn back to Syria and Egypt in a desperate attempt to get to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean as a countermove to check the growing Portuguese expansion in that area...": *The Origins of the Šafawids*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 45-46.

<sup>9</sup> These events are all discussed in some detail in Martin B. Dickson, "Shāh Tahmāsb and the Ūzbeks (The Duel for Khurāsān with 'Ubayd Khān: 930-946/1524-1540)," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Oriental Studies, Princeton University (1958), 51-295. During the qizilbash civil wars first the Ustajlu were defeated (1526-27), then the Rumlu chief Div Sultan was overthrown by the Takkalus under Chuha Sultan in 1527; finally the Takkalus were wiped out in 1530-31 and the Shamlus under chief Husayn Khan controlled the state until he was connected with a conspiracy and executed in 1533: see Roger M. Savory, "The principal offices of the Safavid state during the reign of Tahmāsp I (930-84/1524-76)," pp. 65-86 in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, volume XXIV (1961), 65-71.

prisoners of campaigns there in the 1540s and 1550s.<sup>10</sup> Tahmasp's foreign policy was basically defensive: he moved the capital from Tabriz to Qazvin to make it less accessible to Ottoman encroachments, and signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans at Amasya in 1555. In the east he was generally content to liberate Khurasan from a series of Uzbek invasions without ever pursuing the enemy into its territory across the Oxus river.

Tahmasp's death in 1576 touched off another period of instability, with the qizilbash chiefs lining up behind different contenders for the crown. The throne passed first to his son Isma'il who had been imprisoned for twenty years and suffered from mental disorders. Isma'il II blinded and killed his blood rivals while leading tribes settled scores with each other in the provinces (Takkalus and Turkmen against Shamlus and Ustajlus). In November 1577 Isma'il died in his sleep, quite possibly poisoned by his sister Pari Khan Khanum who was in turn strangled in February 1578. Isma'il's sole surviving brother, the weak and nearly blind Muhammad Khudabandeh, assumed the throne and qizilbash rivalries resurfaced, resulting in the death of the shah's wife, Mahd-i 'Ulya in 1580, his *vazir* (chief minister) Mirza Salman in 1583, and his son Hamza Mirza in 1586. The Ottomans meanwhile seized the opportunity to occupy Tabriz and the Uzbeks raided Khurasan. Finally, the Ustajlu chief Murshid Quli Khan marched into the capital in October 1588 and put 'Abbas, the shah's eighteen year-old son, on the throne, hoping thereby to control Iran as the guardian of the young new shah.<sup>11</sup>

Shah 'Abbas managed to restore internal order, first using Murshid Quli Khan's authority to eliminate many of the tribal chiefs responsible for the troubles of the 1570s and 1580s, and finally, in 1589 executing the regent himself. In 1590 'Abbas signed a humiliating treaty with the Ottomans, ceding parts of the provinces of Azarbaijan, Georgia, Luristan and Kurdistan, but this gave him the breathing space to restore the rest of the country. A new standing army of 40,000 men was created, including Georgian "slave"-converts, and equipped with modern fire-arms, in addition to the

<sup>10</sup> The organization and social/ethnic composition of the Safavid state will be examined in more detail in the next section.

<sup>11</sup> Much of this paragraph is based on the outstanding chronicle of the Safavid period by Eskandar Beg Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great* (*Tārīk-e 'Ālam-ārā-ye 'Abbāsī*), translated by Roger M. Savory in two volumes (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 203-493. See also Savory's account in *Iran under the Safavids*, 67ff.

traditional tribal cavalry. With this force, paid from the royal treasury and responsible only to himself, 'Abbas embarked on a "reconquest" of Iran. By 1597 most of the provinces under Safavid authority were secured from internal strife and unruly provincial governors had been removed from office. Turning next to the external enemy, 'Abbas retook Khurasan from the Uzbeks in 1598, regained Tabriz and Georgia in 1605-7, and by 1697 established sovereignty over virtually all of Iran as defined by the 1555 treaty of Amasya.<sup>12</sup>

'Abbas had a profound impact on the major institutions of Iranian society. In the administration, as well as the army, a new and delicate balance was sought among Turcoman tribal qizilbash, Persian bureaucrats and the new elements from the Caucasus. Tribal power was systematically reduced in a variety of ways, all of which contributed to the absolutist power of the monarchy. In 1597/98 the capital was moved from Qazvin to Isfahan and massive public works were undertaken there. Diplomatic and commercial contacts with Europe were steadily expanded during the course of 'Abbas's reign and will be extensively examined in a later section. Peace was eventually established on all frontiers and remained intact for the rest of the seventeenth century, greatly stimulating internal and external trade and security and enriching the state. On all these indices the Iranian social formation had reached a zenith of sorts on the eve of 'Abbas's death in 1629, and it is to a closer look at the mechanisms of the Safavid polity and economy at this point in time that we now turn.

## II. The Nature of the State

The Safavid state can be analyzed in terms of three key institutions—the central bureaucracy, the provincial government and the army.<sup>13</sup> The shah and his court constituted the apex of a vast bureaucracy centered in Isfahan, the capital. The highest officials of the court included the Grand

<sup>12</sup> The events of this period are discussed in Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 76-91; Farmayan, *The Beginnings of Modernization in Iran*, 9-14; and Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 515-947. The structure of the army will be examined in detail in the next section on the state. The use of the term "slave" (Turkish *qullar*, Persian *ghulam*) to refer to the Georgians and other Christians in the Safavid army and bureaucracy can be misleading, as it must be kept in mind that these individuals rose to the highest ranks and enjoyed honors and privileges as a result of their service.

<sup>13</sup> Relevant aspects of the state's economic activities (especially the royal workshops and the silk trade), urban government, and questions of legitimation will be considered in sections III and IV of this chapter. State revenues and expenditures are discussed at the end of this section.

Vazir (chief or prime minister), the senior officer of the tribal regiments (*qurchi-bashi*), the senior officer of the convert regiments (*qullar-aqasi*), the chief of protocol (*ishik-aqasi-bashi*), the senior officer of the infantry (*tufangchi-bashi*), the chief justice (*divan-begi*), the recorder of the king's audiences (*vaqi'a-nivis*), the superintendent of the royal workshops (*nazir-i buyutat*), the chief of hunting (*amir-shikar-bashi*), the head of the artillery (*tupchi-bashi*), the state treasurer or comptroller general (*mustaufi al-mamalik*), and the chief religious official (*sadr*).<sup>14</sup> The first seven of these were known as the "council amirs," who met regularly to discuss affairs of state and give advice to the king.<sup>15</sup> Behind this topmost stratum came numerous other posts and offices—court physicians, astrologers, palace eunuchs, aides-de-camp, pages, artists and skilled artisans. The administrative bureaucracy included clerks and financial agents attached to each of the several branches and departments of the government—court, workshops, tax collection, military units—"the innumerable clerical staff of the Safavi administration, which was a busy world of red tape making endorsements, inscribing sacramental formulas, affixing seals and collecting fees."<sup>16</sup> Eskandar Beg Monshi estimates that in 1576 there were some 1,500 officials at the court, each with five to fifty attendants and subordinates, making more than 20,000 people (not including their families) at the court in all.<sup>17</sup> The personnel of the central bureaucracy were paid partly in cash and fees for their services, but mostly in drafts against some portion of the land taxes paid to the state by the peasantry, which they had to collect

<sup>14</sup> These positions, along with their salaries and functions, are listed in V. Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk. A Manual of Safavid Administration (circa 1137/1725)* (London: Luzac, 1943), 44-52, 85-91, 112-25. Relations between the secular and religious powers will be discussed later in this section.

<sup>15</sup> The existence of the council amirs is specified in *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 44. The French traveller Chardin states that there was no formal council of state, except in times of war, but he does refer to an informal daily gathering of high officers at the approach to the harem, indicating a kind of "consultation" between the shah and leading dignitaries: see Jean Chardin, *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin, en Perse, et autres lieux de l'orient* (Paris: Le Normant, 1811), volume V, 237-39. Minorsky cites another contemporary European,

Sanson, 138, [who] says that all the decisions are taken in the King's Council, and expresses a high opinion of the capacity of Persians to deliberate: "ils donnent aux affaires toute l'attention qu'elles méritent et ne forment pas leurs décisions que sur des réflexions exactes."

*Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 114. A contemporary Iranian account is provided by Uruch Beg Bayat, known as the "Don Juan of Persia," one of 'Abbas's ambassadors to Europe:

The king of Persia for his support and guidance always has recourse to his nobles, this both for the service of his person, and for the government of the state in all affairs, both those pertaining to the administration of justice and to the conduct of war, and these two are the matters which in Persia take precedence over all others.

Guy le Strange, translator and editor, *Don Juan of Persia, a Shi'ah Catholic (1560-1604)* (London: Broadway Travellers, 1927), 45.

<sup>16</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 132.

<sup>17</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 228.

either in person, or more usually, through collectors who took 5-10 percent of the amount due.<sup>18</sup>

Before turning to the nature of the provincial administration, it will be useful to discuss briefly the ethnic composition of the Safavid administrative elite and the issue of social mobility into and out of it. Shah 'Abbas presided over a state administration consisting of three major ethnic groups—long-standing Persian notable families who occupied many of the civilian posts in the bureaucracy, the Safavids' original Turcoman tribal base which provided military commanders and provincial governors, and a new "third force" consisting of Christian Georgians, Armenians and Circassians taken prisoner on campaigns in the Caucasus and brought up at court as Muslims who in the early seventeenth century came increasingly to furnish top civilian and military personnel. Comparisons of the lists of high-ranking amirs in 1576 and 1629 show a dramatic change from primarily Turcoman qizilbash chiefs to about 40 percent qizilbash, 40 percent non-qizilbash tribal chiefs (mostly Kurds and Lurs) and 20 percent *ghulams* (royal slaves) from the Caucasus.<sup>19</sup> There are a number of instances recorded of people rising from obscure or lower class origins to positions of influence, as well as sudden declines in fortune for those who incurred the shah's wrath.<sup>20</sup> Chardin notes that the shah made appointments without regard to birth, going so far as to claim there was no hereditary nobility in Iran, with respect due only to one's office, merit and wealth.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 152-53; for the salaries of the various officials, see *ibid.*, 86ff. Chardin writes that the shah paid almost solely in drafts (*barats*), not in cash: *Voyages*, V, 429-30. He had high praise overall however for the methods of the treasury and bureaucracy, which, though long, were meticulous: *ibid.*, 449.

<sup>19</sup> These lists are compiled by Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 222-28 (for 1576) and 1309-17 (for 1629). They are broken down and analyzed by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 15-18. My percentages are based on the further decomposition of the tribal chiefs provided by Bausani, *The Persians*, 147-48.

<sup>20</sup> Savory lists some striking examples of such social mobility upwards in *Iran under the Safavids*, 183. Other examples from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be found in Aubin, "Études Safavides. I," 73; Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 1260; and Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 452-53. Adam Olearius, a German who spent a year in Iran as part of an embassy from the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein about 1636, mentions the example of the khan of Shamakhi, the son of a peasant who was made comptroller of ordinance at the siege of Erivan by Shah Safi (who ruled 1632-1642), and then khan (governor) of Shamakhi, "... it being the Custom among the *Persians*, to value a man rather by his Worth and Courage, than his Birth": Adam Olearius, *The Ambassadors from the Duke of Holstein's Travels into Muscovy*..., pp. 1-112 in John Harris, *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca* (London: Thomas Bennet, 1705), volume II, 61.

Nikki Keddie puts such cases in perspective by noting:

... there appears to have been much upward and downward mobility for a few at the centers of wealth and power (sometimes as far downward as the grave), while some families show continuity of wealth and public office, and far more show continuity in poverty and powerlessness.

*Roots of Revolution*, 28-29.

<sup>21</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 290, 333.

In the sixteenth century, provincial government had been reserved almost solely for the leading families of the several qizilbash Turcoman tribes and clans; by the time of 'Abbas their hold on power had been systematically weakened through a variety of policies (such as placing an amir from one tribe in charge of another, appointing a ghulam from Georgia or the Caucasus as amir of a tribe, and transferring groups of people from one tribe to the area of another).<sup>22</sup> As a result the provincial government too came to be shared out among the several components of the elite (after 'Abbas died in 1629, the royal family would undertake direct administration of large parts of Iran in addition to Isfahan, the capital, unleashing a process whose consequences will be studied in Chapter Three).<sup>23</sup>

The Safavid administrative manual *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* (ca. 1722) divided Iran into 17 provincial administrative units. Four of these—Arabistan (or Khuzistan), Luristan, Kurdistan and Georgia—were considered semi-independent areas:

They all belonged to ancient families of hereditary rulers and, in spite of their incorporation in the Safavid state, enjoyed practical independence. Their revenue was not included in the budget and, apart from military assistance, they owed their suzerain nothing but tribute disguised as gifts.<sup>24</sup>

The remaining 13, constituting most of Iran, were placed under the control of administrators (*hakim*) of various degrees (*beglarbegi*/"governor-general," *khan*/"governor," or *sultan*/"deputy governor")—these were Qandahar, Shirvan, Harat, Azarbaijan, Chukur-i Sa'd, Qarabagh/Ganja, Astarabad, Kuh-Giluya, Kirman, Marv, Hamadan, Mashhad and Qazvin.<sup>25</sup> The governors of these regions "sent to the capital only limited sums of cash, but considerable stocks (*bārkhāna*) of local products for the King's table and raw materials for the royal workshops."<sup>26</sup> They were also held

<sup>22</sup> R. M. Savory, article on "Kizilbāsh," pp. 243-245 in C. E. Bosworth *et al.*, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), volume V, 245. Chardin writes: "The old Persians, in particular, mortally detest these Georgian slaves newly come into the country. They call them *kara ogli*, meaning race of serfs": *Voyages*, V, 228.

<sup>23</sup> Savory claims that 'Abbas himself initiated this policy of converting state provinces (*mamalik*) formerly administered by qizilbash chieftains into crown provinces (*khass*) directly administered by the shah's appointee: *Iran under the Safavids*, 79-80. Chardin states that this distinction was not made before the reign of Safi I (1629-1642): *Voyages*, V, 250. See also Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 26. The whole issue will be examined in detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>24</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 112.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 43-44.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 25. These products included butter from Kurdistan, wine, fruits and servants from Georgia, silk from Gilan, etc., and clearly amounted to great quantities, as Chardin notes: "The shah's household is thereby provided for and all that crowd of artisans who are paid with food stuffs": *Voyages*, V, 395.

responsible for security in their provinces by an obligation to recover or replace stolen goods.<sup>27</sup> Most importantly, each governor was required to provide a stipulated number of troops to the royal army in time of war. In return, "... the governors enjoyed great freedom. They collected local revenue and used local resources for assignments to their subordinates among whom there were considerable contingents of armed attendants."<sup>28</sup> According to the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, governors had the salaries and troop commitments shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1  
Provincial Governors in Safavid Iran

Region (Number of Governors)	Governors' Salary (in tumans)	Troops Provided by Governors
North-West (4)	142,448	27,666
North-East (5)	68,373	16,039
North (2)	25,197	4,978
Center (1)	17,933	2,947
West (2)	8,233	1,811
South (1)	39,347	6,055
TOTAL (15)	301,531	59,496

Source: Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 161. Note: the table is incomplete and only roughly approximates the situation in 1629. The tuman was worth 3.3 pounds sterling in the seventeenth century.

The important question of the extent of the governors' powers and autonomy vis-a-vis the court is a complex one. Chardin tells us that the provincial governors:

... have complete authority in their province. They are like little kings there.... The governors of provinces are appointed for life; and if they conduct themselves so well that they are not removed, their children are appointed to succeed them, either after their death or when they are appointed to higher positions.<sup>29</sup>

Uruch Beg Bayat wrote in Shah 'Abbas's time:

In matters of policy and in affairs of state, and in all that pertains to war, the nobles and viceroys of provinces have jurisdiction, and they are called Kháns. The Kháns, though

<sup>27</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 528: "This rule was enforced throughout the Safavid empire [by 'Abbas]. As a result, property was secure, and people could travel without hindrance to and from Iran."

<sup>28</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 25.

<sup>29</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 255.

their offices are considered hereditary, for they hold them as though of their own property, are liable to be dismissed by the king at his pleasure, should they anyway be found in fault, for they are but his servants; and indeed all the Kháns and governors who serve the state holding positions of importance are liable to be arbitrarily dismissed at any moment.<sup>30</sup>

Data from both the sixteenth and later seventeenth centuries suggest that the shahs exercised their prerogative to remove these "hereditary" governors with some regularity.<sup>31</sup> Chardin writes too that each governor was assisted and observed by administrators who reported to and depended on the shah.<sup>32</sup> Falling from grace often entailed not just dismissal from one's post, but the confiscation of much of one's wealth.<sup>33</sup> It is not unreasonable to conclude, then, that under a strong monarch such as 'Abbas, the central authority held the upper hand vis-a-vis its erstwhile provincial representatives.

The third great institution of the Safavid state—the army—was also by the seventeenth century an amalgam of the older tribal elite from the provinces and a newer state-controlled force created by 'Abbas. The tribal army that brought the Safavids to power had shown its limitations in the 1514 defeat by the Ottomans at Chaldiran, and its disadvantages from the viewpoint of the monarchy in the civil war periods of 1524-33 and 1576-88. The key reforms—bringing in peasants, Iranian tribesmen and convert (ghulam) soldiers and equipping them with modern fire-arms on a large scale—took place in 1598-1600, and were one of the cornerstones of 'Abbas's successful centralization policies aimed at containing tribal power.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Le Strange, *Don Juan of Persia*, 46-47.

<sup>31</sup> Dickson gives evidence to this effect: "Sháh Tahmásb and the Úzbeks," 13, 18, 19, 66, 351-52, 365. He also notes: "Under Shah Isma'il the governors were completely dependent upon the Court and were frequently changed as either punishment or reward": *ibid.*, 13. The governorship of Kakhétia (Georgia) passed among at least seven different individuals between 1659 and 1703, for an average of only 6-7 years per person in the position: Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 166.

<sup>32</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 258. Monshi said of 'Abbas: "He has a well-developed intelligence system, with the result that no one, even if he is sitting at home with his family, can express opinions which should not be expressed without running the risk of their being reported to the Shah. This has actually happened on numerous occasions": *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 533.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Chardin:

Every disgrace in Persia inevitably brings with it the confiscation of goods, and this can be a prodigious and horrifying change of fortune, for the man finds himself stripped in an instant of everything. His goods, his servants, and sometimes even his wife and children are taken from him.... [After the shah has decided his case] his family is almost always restored to him, along with some of his servants and possessions; ordinarily he is left with enough to live on, and often enough in time he returns to the good graces of the court, and re-enters its service.

*Voyages*, V, 285-86. Confiscation of the goods of anyone ordered killed by the shah was practically automatic: *ibid.*, VII, 430. See also Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 181 note 4.

<sup>34</sup> The use of guns and muskets is recorded under Shah Tahmasp at the Battle of Jam against the Uzbeks in 1528 (see Dickson, "Sháh Tahmásb and the Úzbeks," 129-30), and by the chronicle *Ahsan al-tavarikh* in 1552 and again by the Italian traveller d'Alessandri around 1571: "Consequently the percolation of fire-arms into Persia began long before Shah 'Abbās, whose reform consisted in the creation of special corps recruited among entirely new classes": Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 31-32.

The Safavid army in 'Abbas's time was thus composed along the lines suggested by Table

## 2.2.<sup>35</sup> The musketeers

Table 2.2  
The Safavid Army in the 1620s

New-style troops	Number of Men
Iranian peasant musketeers ( <i>tufangchis</i> )	12,000
Convert "slave" cavalry ( <i>qullars</i> )	10-15,000
Artillery ( <i>tupchis</i> )	12,000
Old-style troops	
Qizilbash tribal cavalry ( <i>qurchis</i> )	60,000
TOTAL	94-99,000

Sources: Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 32-35; Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 299ff.

lived in the country as peasants when not fighting; they travelled on horseback but fought on foot, equipped with saber, dagger and musket.<sup>36</sup> The new-style cavalry (*qullars*) were of Christian origin (from Georgia and the Caucasus); wearing coats of mail and helmets like the tribal cavalry, they

On the new social basis of the Safavid army, Monshi writes:

Because the rivalry of the *qezelbāš* had led them to commit all sorts of enormities, and because their devotion to the Safavid royal house had been weakened by dissension, Shah 'Abbas decided (as the result of divine inspiration, which is vouchsafed to kings but not to ordinary mortals), to admit into the armed forces groups other than the *qezelbāš*. He enrolled in the armed forces large numbers of Georgian, Circassian, and other *ḡulāms*, and created the office of *qullar-aqāsi* (commander in chief of the *ḡulām* regiments), which had not previously existed under the Safavid regime. Several thousand men were drafted into regiments of musketeers from the Čagātāy tribe, and from various Arab and Persian tribes in Khorasan, Azerbaijan, and Tabarestān. Into the regiments of musketeers, too, were drafted all the riff-raff from every province—sturdy, serviceable men who were unemployed and preyed on the lower classes of society. By this means the lower classes were given relief from their lawless activities, and the recruits made amends for their past sins by performing useful service in the army. All these men were placed on the *ḡulām* muster rolls. Without question, they were an essential element in 'Abbas's conquests, and their employment had many advantages.

*History of Shah 'Abbas*, 527.

<sup>35</sup> The actual total number of troops is difficult to ascertain with any precision. Pietro della Valle, writing around 1620 (cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 35), put the army at 70-80,000 combatants, of whom 40-50,000 could actually be used on a campaign. Chardin estimated the army at 120,000 under 'Abbas I, of which 70,00 were qizilbash, 50,000 came from the three new standing corps, and 10,000 from the shah's "household": *Voyages*, V, 314. Minorsky adds 58,289 to the old-style troops in Table 2.2 as the regular provincial militia of the local governors and calls them *mulaziman* ("attendants"), but I feel these are the 60,000 qizilbash *qurchis* in the table (to include them would bring the total to over 150,00 men, which is rather higher than any contemporary estimate): *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 161. He also notes, quite plausibly, that "with retainers and followers (of whom the noblemen kept 50-100), the grand total [of the army on campaign] would reach 200-300,000": *ibid.*, 35. Chardin notes that on campaign the army had to buy their own provisions, which were obtained from the many grocers and cooks who accompanied them: *Voyages*, V, 318.

<sup>36</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 305-6.

carried a musket rather than a lance, and were considered especially loyal to the shah.<sup>37</sup> The artillery regiment proved more difficult to integrate into the highly-mobile, primarily mounted Safavid army; Chardin reports that the unit was reduced after the loss of Baghdad in 1638 and disbanded under 'Abbas II in 1655.<sup>38</sup> The old-style tribal cavalry (*qurchis*), though no longer the sole fighting force, remained in Chardin's view the most competent fighters in the army, using bow and arrow, sword and dagger, and a lance and battle axe.<sup>39</sup> It is worth noting that despite extensive coasts on the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf, there was no Iranian navy, or even commercial vessels, according to Chardin.<sup>40</sup> All units were organized under a hierarchy of officers in charge of one thousand men (*minbashi*, "colonel"), one hundred men (*yuz-bashi*, "captain"), or ten men (*on-bashi*, "sergeant"). A military commander-in-chief was appointed only in case of hostilities, which became far less frequent after the 1620s.<sup>41</sup> Like the civilian bureaucracy, both officers and rank and file soldiers were paid in drafts on the land revenue of some specified location; Chardin says that the qullar regiments were paid 8-9 tumans a year, the musketeers about one-half this amount. Du Mans gives high estimates of 100-500 tumans for officers, and puts the ordinary qizilbash's pay at 7-12 tumans; Minorsky, following della Valle, says a trooper's pay was at least five tumans "which enabled him to exist comfortably."<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 306; Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 33; Farmayan, *Beginnings of Modernization in Iran*, 18.

<sup>38</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 312-13. Minorsky adds "in the last years of the Safavid dominion the Artillery must have been restored in its rights for it is mentioned as a part of several expeditions sent to Khorasan under Shah Sultān-Husayn" (ruled 1694-1722): *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 33. He also puts these developments in an interesting comparative perspective:

In fact artillery was a long neglected arm in the English army. Speaking of the famous ordinance in 15 Feb., 1645, by which a regular and standing army was created, Hon. J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, 2nd ed., 1910, I, 216, remarks: "the truth seems to be that the English were behind the times in respect of field artillery; and indeed we hear little of guns, except a siege-cannon, during the whole period of the Civil War. English military writers of the period rarely make much of artillery in a pitched battle."

*Ibid.*, 33 note 2.

<sup>39</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 302. He notes:

The troops of this corps are of Turcoman or Tartar origin, an old race of good soldiers, thrifty and robust people, who live apart in the countryside without mixing with other people, and who are those "sarrasin" pastoralists or shepherds who have so often changed the state of Persia...

*Ibid.*, V, 299-300. Minorsky, following Chardin's description, calls them "walking arsenals": *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 32.

<sup>40</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 329-30, who points out that the Gulf is both unhealthful and lacking in good ports.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 314, 321-22.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 312. Du Mans and della Valle are cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 155, 155 note 1. Raphaël du Mans was a Capuchin missionary resident in Isfahan from 1645 to 1696, author of *Estat de la Perse en 1660*, with notes and appendix by Ch. Schefer (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1890).

The total revenues and expenditures of the Iranian state for an average year in the seventeenth century are very difficult to estimate. The *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* gives the figures shown in Table 2.3 for ca. 1722.

Table 2.3  
Revenues and Expenditures of Iran, ca. 1722

Revenues		
Source	Amount (in tumans)	Percent of Total
Land tax ( <i>avaraza</i> )	477,856.9800	61.0
Land tax ( <i>khassa</i> )	176,971.2405	22.6
Fees ( <i>dabita</i> )	114,440.5100	14.6
Mines	13,100.7000	1.7
Tax on gifts	1,493.3716	0.2
Total Cash Revenue	783,862.8021	100.0

Expenditures		
Item	Amount	Percent of Total
Salaries	532,288.0269	85
Pensions, grants, immunities	93,032.5000	15
Total expenditures	625,320.5269	100.0

Source: Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 105-9.

The figures on income do not include the vast amounts of goods that came in kind to the court, nor do they include labor service, especially in construction, that the shah could demand free of charge from certain guilds.<sup>43</sup> There is also the extremely knotty problem of sorting out the royal domain income (*khass*) from the state income (*avaraza*, above) as the differential proportions of the two had changed considerably from 1629 to 1722.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless we may take the above figures as rough estimates, which tally remarkably well with Chardin's estimate of the 1670s that the shah's income

<sup>43</sup> The latter practice will be discussed in detail in section III on the urban economy.

<sup>44</sup> This is the problem referred to in note 23 above. Minorsky observes that the *khassa* figure of 176,634 tumans is only part of the total *khassa*, and seems to mean that certain *divan* (state) resources were channelled to the shah's private treasury: *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 175. Chardin puts income from state lands (*avaraza* in the table) at two million francs and from the royal demesnes (*khassa* in the table) at 14 million: *Voyages*, V, 413. If we take this to mean that the ratio was 7 to 1, then the total revenue figures would have to be revised very dramatically upwards.

came to 700,000 tumans (32 million French livres) and expenditures came to about 744,000 tumans (34 million livres).<sup>45</sup> The latter figure is broken down in Table 2.4 into its component parts.

Table 2.4  
State Expenditures, 1670s

Expenditure	Amount (in francs)	Percent of Total
Troops	13 million	38.2
Royal family	10 million	29.4
Workshops	4 million	11.8
Harem	4 million	11.8
Kitchen and wardrobe	3 million	8.8
TOTAL	34 million	100.0

Source: Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 498.

From Table 2.3 it emerges that roughly 83 percent—the overwhelming majority—of the Safavid state's income derived from various forms of the land tax, with another 14.5 percent coming from "fees," which included the road taxes and customs, tobacco tax, poll tax on non-Muslims and various "extraordinary" taxes, especially on animals.<sup>46</sup> The shah's one-third tax on all minerals yielded only two percent of total revenues.<sup>47</sup> The greatest part of the salaries listed on the expenditure side were paid out to governors and amirs in the form of grants in the land tax worth 349,500 tumans, or 56 percent of total expenditures. Another 65,784 tumans—10.5 percent of the total—went as salaries to the military commanders. Assuming that the provincial governors served a primarily military function, the combined direct and indirect proportion of total expenditures that went for military purposes comes to 66.5 percent; Chardin's figures from Table 2.4 put expenditures on the troops at 38.2 percent of the total. The upkeep of the court (royal family, harem, kitchens) seems to have absorbed some 50 percent of the total, according to Chardin, while the remaining 11.8 percent was spent rather more productively on the royal workshops (to be examined later).

<sup>45</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 412-13 on revenues; V, 497 on expenditures. Elsewhere, Chardin says that the shah takes in 1,200 tumans a day and spends 1,000: *ibid.*, 498. Though this would give much lower total revenues and expenditures, it would come close to the net positive balance of 15-20 percent. In general, Chardin is only making educated guesses, while the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* gives detailed figures based on the state's accounts.

<sup>46</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 177.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* These included pearls, turquoise, copper, small quantities of gold and silver, and oil (!) from Baku and Shirvan.

The net annual balance of revenues and expenditures in Table 2.3 is positive to the amount of some 160,000 tumans (about 20 percent of total income), worth over 500,000 pounds sterling in the seventeenth century. This money would be hoarded in the royal treasury, which contained immense amounts of wealth for the times.<sup>48</sup> Chardin judged the Safavid shah the "richest monarch in the universe," as rich himself as "all the rest of his kingdom."<sup>49</sup> A very rough comparison of Safavid Iran with the great European kingdoms of the period is made in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5  
England, France and Iran ca. 1700

Country	Population	State Income
Iran	6-10 million	goods in kind + 800,000 tumans
England	6 million	3.8 million pounds sterling = 930,000 tumans
France	19 million	577 million francs = 12,800,000 tumans

Source: based on Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 186. Note: figures for Iran's population are very approximate, as for England's net income. Chardin observes that the shah's income consisted more in goods than in cash: *Voyages*, V, 415.

The Iranian state compares very evenly with England's, though not too well with the heavy taxing machinery of absolutist France (the amount of the shah's income in goods in kind would however redress part of the balance).<sup>50</sup> It is interesting that only one-third of English revenue came from the land tax in 1700; most of it seems to have come from customs and trade duties. England, too, was building a vast fleet with its income which would later bring it rich dividends. If the table could be projected back to the 1620s, Iran at its peak under Shah 'Abbas would probably have compared even

<sup>48</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 485ff., gives a vivid impression of the wealth contained in the treasury, which he once had occasion to view in part: rooms full of precious stones and gold objects whose value he found impossible to estimate (though he was a master jeweller). He concludes, "I don't believe there is anywhere in the world where more wealth is gathered in one place": *ibid.*, 491.

Minorsky notes that the sixteenth-century chronicle, the *Sharafnameh*, calls Tahmasp the wealthiest sovereign since Chingis Khan's time; the author, Sharaf Khan of Bitlis, was commissioned by Tahmasp to make an inventory of the treasury and other royal property, and among other items recorded 380,000 tumans in cash, 600 ingots of gold and silver, 30,000 robes of honor (made of precious stuffs), arms and equipment for 30,000 men and horses, 3,000 camels, 3,000 Arab mares, etc.: *Sharafnameh*, edited by Veliaminov-Zernov, I, 453; II, 251-52, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 185.

<sup>49</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 414-15.

<sup>50</sup> The income of the French state moreover rose enormously, from 17 million livres (or francs) in 1610 to 44 million in 1644 to the 577 million noted in Table 2.5 for ca. 1700. Thus at the Safavids' height ca. 1630 the Iranian state's income was roughly on a par with that of France at the time. By 1700 this would no longer be true. For figures, see Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 98.

more favorably with the European kingdoms; conversely, the latter may be supposed to have made greater gains in the course of the seventeenth century than did Iran, whose relative (and perhaps absolute) stagnation will be examined in Chapter Three.

By virtue of its control over the key state institutions—central bureaucracy, provincial government and army—the seventeenth-century Iranian ruling class of shah, high bureaucrats, military commanders and provincial governors was the state. Taken as a whole this state had a powerful grip on the rest of society and commanded much of the country's overall surplus, but equally importantly this ruling class was internally much divided into the multiple interests which composed it. In the sixteenth century tribal military leaders had twice fought among themselves for paramount positions in Iranian society, and there was a more or less constant tension between largely Persian-speaking bureaucratic families and the Turcoman qizilbash tribal elite for control of the state. After 1590 'Abbas redistributed the balance of power away from the tribes by bringing in a third force of Georgians and other Caucasian captives and their descendants as high civil and military personnel. By creating a standing army directly under royal control 'Abbas exercised firm mastery over the provincial governors, none of whom could henceforth presume to challenge the central authority. The Safavid state, then, tended under 'Abbas toward absolutism, and worked most smoothly when its fractious internal elements were kept in check by a powerful monarchy. The subsequent vicissitudes of this delicate mechanism will be examined in Chapter Three. We turn now to the economic bases on which this political system reposed.

### III. The Economic Structure of Iran in the 1620s

The total population of seventeenth-century Iran is rather difficult to know; estimates vary from about five or six million to as high as ten million, which would be equal to the population as recently as about 1900. Laurence Lockhart feels that in the late 1660s the population "may have amounted to between eight and ten millions, but this is mere conjecture."<sup>51</sup> Minorsky notes in passing: "At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Persian population could not exceed one-half

<sup>51</sup> Laurence Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty and the Afghan Occupation of Persia* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1958), 11.

that of France [which was 19 million] and possibly was considerably lower."<sup>52</sup> John Emerson points out of these estimates that neither "adduces any evidence in support of these figures."<sup>53</sup> Charles Issawi has collected estimates for the nineteenth century implying an increase from five million in 1812 to between eight and ten and a half million by 1910, and surmises that for the seventeenth century the population was greater than five or six million, admitting that no one knows by how much.<sup>54</sup>

Iran's six to ten million inhabitants in Safavid times were distributed among three economic sectors—tribal pastoralists, rural peasants and urban craft producers. Estimates for the proportion of the population who lived as tribespeople vary from Leonard Helfgott's "approximately one-fourth of the population of Iran" between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries, to Bausani's estimate of something on the order of perhaps one-third (based on thirty percent for the late nineteenth century, and "even higher" for the seventeenth), up to Issawi's high of almost one-half (extrapolating backward from his observation that "the proportion of nomads fell from perhaps a half to about a quarter of the total population" during the nineteenth century).<sup>55</sup> Taking an average of the various estimates—say 33 to 40 percent of eight million people—we arrive at a tribal population of some three million people for the seventeenth century as a very rough estimate (other combinations of these figures range from a possible low of one and a half million to a possible high of five million). It is to this large group in the population that we turn first in our empirical analysis of the Safavid economy.

<sup>52</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 186.

<sup>53</sup> John Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux. Some European Sources on the Economic Structure of Persia Between About 1630 and 1690," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Oriental Studies, University of Cambridge (1969), 229. Emerson also notes Chardin's vastly inflated contemporary estimate of forty million: *Voyages*, III, 267, cited in *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Charles Issawi, "Population and Resources in the Ottoman Empire and Iran," pp. 152-164 in Thomas Naff and Roger Owen, editors, *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 162.

<sup>55</sup> These estimates are made respectively in Leonard M. Helfgott, "Tribalism as a Socioeconomic Formation in Iranian History," pp. 36-61 in *Iranian Studies*, volume X, numbers 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1977), 36; Bausani, *The Persians*, 150; and Charles Issawi, editor, *The Economic History of Iran: 1800-1914* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 20 (hereafter cited as *EHI*).

Two Soviet scholars have estimated the tribes at one-third of Iran's population in the "late medieval period": see I. M. Reisner and B. K. Rubtsov, editors, *Novaia istorii stran zarubezhnogo vostoka*, two volumes (Moscow, 1952), I, 79, cited by Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 11.

### III.A. The Tribal Sector

From about 1000 A.D. onward, the Iranian social formation began to witness co-existence and conflict between two political economies: Iranian villagers and townspeople, and Turkic pastoralists. Ghuz (or Oghuz) Turcoman tribes from Transoxiana in Central Asia first came to Iran in the early eleventh century, some settling in the northwest and others continuing into Anatolia. They were followed by more Oghuz in 1185-87 into the area around Kirman, then by the devastating Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, by Timur-i Lang (Tamerlane) from 1380 to 1404, and finally in the fifteenth century by migration westward out of Anatolia into Iran by Turcoman followers of the Qara Quyunlu and Aq Quyunlu tribal confederations and dynasties, and eventually by the qizilbash supporters of the Safavid cause after 1500.<sup>56</sup> The Turcoman tribes who brought the Safavids to power are traditionally held to have been seven in number—the Ustajlu, Shamlu, Takkalu, Rumlu, Zulqadar, Afshar and Qajar. The term qizilbash was later extended to certain non-Turcoman supporters of the Safavids, including Central Asian, Iranian and Kurdish elements. The entire list of tribal pastoralists living in seventeenth-century Iran would be even longer, as Helfgott observes, "Forming over two hundred separate tribal units divided into five major ethnic groupings (Turkoman, Iranian, Kurdish, Arab and Baluch)."<sup>57</sup>

These tribal entities were composed of groups of various sizes:

Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition of what should be called a tribe, in general Iran's tribes identify themselves by distinctive words that translate as "tribe" or "tribal confederation" for their larger units and "clan" for a subunit, and they usually believe their tribes and clans to be related by family ties.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 187-88, and James J. Reid, *Tribalism and Society in Islamic Iran, 1500-1629* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), 43-47. Mazzaoui cites with some caution the "statistic" of Togan, "During the era of the Il-Khāns (1256-1336) ... more than two million Eastern Turks and a number of Mongols came in the wake of Hulagu...": Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safavids*, 59 note 1, citing Z. V. Togan, "Rise of the Turkish Empire," in E. Jackh, editor, *Background of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952), 112-13.

<sup>57</sup> Helfgott, "Tribalism as a Socioeconomic Formation," 36. For lists and discussions of the various tribes and clans see Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 16-17, 193-95; le Strange, *Don Juan of Persia*, 45-46; Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 108; and Richard Tapper, "Black Sheep, White Sheep and Red Heads. A Historical Sketch of the Shāhsavan of Āzarbāijān," pp. 61-84 in *Iran* (Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies), volume IV (1966), 77-78. Some of the locations of these tribes are suggested by maps 2.3 and 2.4 in Appendix II.

<sup>58</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 26. R.D. McCasney draws on Petrushevsky to specify the dimensions of the definitional problem:

From a terminological standpoint, he notes, "there is no precisely and strictly established terminology either in official documents or in narrative sources ... to designate the nomadic tribe and its various sub-divisions—clan, family, etc." Moreover, he continues:

Whatever the terminological difficulties, it is clear that a number of families or households made up a clan, a number of clans formed a tribe, and in some cases at the top of the system a number of tribes joined into a tribal confederation, which in Safavid times was most commonly referred to as an *uymaq*.

An *uymaq* was a grouping of two or more genealogical units that normally had no blood relationships through the paternal line but which quite frequently intermarried. Despite these links of marriage, the association remained an artificial one. It was originally based upon the relative ranking and power of all the different *qizilbash* families.<sup>59</sup>

The *uymaq* system, then, was basically a fluid hierarchy of the Safavids' tribal military supporters, ranked with respect to their relative prestige and influence within the Safavid state. We shall return to the chieftains and military units at the top of this system in a moment; at present it is necessary to analyze the economic basis of tribal life—pastoralism.

Although settled Iranian villagers had engaged in animal husbandry as an important supplement to agriculture from quite ancient times, true pastoralism was only introduced into Iran on a large scale by the Turkic tribes which entered from the Central Asian steppes after the eleventh century. The original economic activity of these nomads has been called "multivariate resource utilization" by James Reid:

[Multivariate pastoralism] required the maintenance of an economic unit as free as possible from dependence on the land. More than one type of livestock animal (mainly cattle, sheep, goats, and camels), each a possible source of food, shelter, and clothing, was maintained in the event that any one type died out suddenly or failed to produce as expected. Raiding and large-scale warfare also played an important role since available economic resources might be insufficient owing to failure of the food supply through panic consumption, overly heavy utilization of the food supply, or the demise of the animals.<sup>60</sup>

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The same terms—*il*, *taifah*, *aymaq*, *ashirah*, etc.—are used sometimes to designate an entire tribe, sometimes a subdivision (clan), and sometimes a family, and any distinction in the terminological significance of these synonymous expressions is not perceptible.

R.D. McChesney, "Comments on 'The Qajar Uymaq in The Safavid Period, 1500-1722'," pp. 87-105 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XIV, numbers 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1981), 88, quoting I. P. Petrushevsky, *Ocherki po istorii feodal'nykh*, 94-95.

<sup>59</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 29. Cf. Petrushevsky: "The nomadic tribes ... were artificially composed units made up of the fragments of more ancient (pre-feudal) family-tribal groups.... Under the Safavids, the terms *aymaq*, *il*, and *ta'ifah* signified an amalgamation of nomads made up of fragments of not only different families but also of different tribes": *Ocherki po istorii feodal'nykh*, 95, quoted by McChesney, "Comments on 'The Qajar Uymaq'," 88.

<sup>60</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 42.

As these groups gradually settled into niches in the Iranian ecosystems (whose mountains and plains differed from the steppes), they adopted more specific or "precipitated" migration routes. Distinct semi-annual migration patterns between summer campgrounds (*yailaq*) in the mountains and winter sites (*qishlaq*) on the plains led to more predictable and less war-like relations with the settled population.

The main economic activities of pastoralists were aimed, as in all natural economies, at satisfying basic needs, through grazing herds, engaging in handicraft production, and sometimes in limited amounts of cultivation:

Most generally, the basic means of production of nomad society consist of various kinds of herd animals and the land on which these herds pasture. Herds provide the society with its most important needs: food (meat, cheese, butter, yogurt), drink (milk), clothing (wool, hides), fuel (dung), means of transport (horses, camels, oxen, donkeys) and paraphernalia.<sup>61</sup>

The pasture land that supported these herds was held collectively by the tribe, and not "owned" in terms of legally established boundaries, but allocated by chieftains who might give the usufruct rights to a campsite to the same or a different family in each successive year.<sup>62</sup> Herds were privately held by individual extended families, as were their produce, tools, implements, dwellings and precious items such as jewelry. Production for use within the tribe was supplemented by production for exchange with the village peasants or townspeople along the migration routes; this generally involved simple bartering of animals and their by-products for agricultural and handicraft goods. Though many historians and anthropologists speak of "interdependence" between tribespeople and the settled population, the extent of their interactions was necessarily limited by the natural economy of pastoralism and the limits to accumulation posed by the need for mobility.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Jahangir Salch, "Social Formations in Iran, 750-1914," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst (1978), 59. Salch refers to L. Krader, *Social Organization of the Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1963), 317.

<sup>62</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 1.

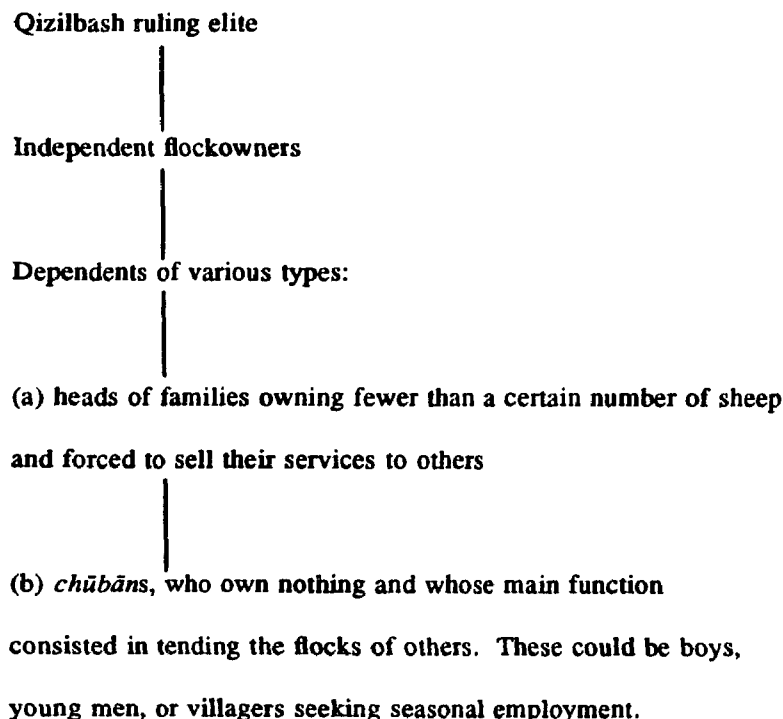
<sup>63</sup> For the interdependence argument:

It is well to remember that historical and ethnographic evidence together suggest that there has never been a totally pastoral society, but that non-pastoral products have always been an important part of the diet of pastoralists, and activities associated with acquiring them have figured largely in their annual cycle and division of labor.

B. Spooner, "Toward a Generative Theory of Nomadism," in *Anthropological Quarterly*, volume 44 (July 1971), 201, quoted by Helfgott, "Tribalism as a Socioeconomic Formation," 45.

For the limits to accumulation:

In terms of internal stratification and appropriation of the surplus, Reid<sup>64</sup> discerns the hierarchic structure within a tribe shown in the diagram below.



The qizilbash chieftains (amirs) at the top of the tribal system—undoubtedly few in number—were the greatest flockowners and employed most of the dependent laborers at the bottom, who served as shepherds and prepared the various animal products—food, clothing and shelter—for them.<sup>65</sup> At the highest levels a handful of them participated in non-pastoral economic systems by virtue of holding posts in the military and provincial government (to be analyzed in a moment). The many independent flockowners who constituted the core of the tribal economy would acknowledge lower-level

No major increases in productivity comparable to those of arable farming were possible, because the means of production was not soil—qualitatively and directly malleable—but herds which depended on land, that was not itself touched by nomadism, and which therefore essentially permitted only quantitative augmentation. The fact that in the nomadic mode of production the basic objects and means of labour were largely identical—livestock—posed insuperable limits to the yield of labour. Pastoral cycles of production were much longer than agricultural, and lacked interludes for the development of rural crafts: moreover all clan members participated in them, including chiefs, thereby preventing the emergence of a division of manual and mental labour, and hence of literacy. Above all, nomadism by definition virtually excluded the formation of towns or urban development, where sedentary agriculture always ultimately promoted them. Beyond a certain point, the nomadic mode of production was therefore vowed to stagnation.

Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: New Left Books/Verso Edition, 1978 [1974]), 222.

<sup>64</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 77.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

chiefs or elders (*rish safid*, literally "white beard") as mediators of such crucial issues as allocation of specific pasture lands along the migration routes to each family in the camp group (*oba*).<sup>66</sup> Keddie notes the key economic roles performed by women:

Tribal women, like most peasant women, are not veiled, and they usually do more physical labor than the men, including spinning, weaving, cooking, agriculture, and animal husbandry.<sup>67</sup>

It is difficult to know much about the conditions of life of the ordinary tribesperson. On the one hand the limits of a natural economy must have asserted themselves to keep most people at the virtual subsistence level, and this was compounded by the extraction of surplus upwards to the chiefs and state:

... the pastoralist became a counter of wealth, responsible for producing the necessities of life, such as food and clothing, which were then exploited by the leaders of the group(s) and their families. These leaders might be responsible for providing a percentage of the income to someone in a position higher than themselves, and so on through the chain of authority. The whole of Persia was a network of these chains...<sup>68</sup>

The major form of surplus extraction occurred through a tax on animals, apparently ranging from one-seventh (or even lower) to one-third.<sup>69</sup> At either rate, a smaller percentage of surplus was

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 76; Helfgott, "Tribalism as a Socioeconomic Formation," 49; Petrushevsky, *Ocherki po istorii feodal'nykh*, cited by McChesney, "Comments on 'The Qajar Uymaq in The Safavid Period'," 95.

<sup>67</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 26. Though she is writing of nineteenth-century Iran, I see no reason to doubt the applicability of her statement to the seventeenth-century tribal economy. As she points out:

In Iran and the Middle East nomadic tribeswomen do most of the tribe's physical labor, are unveiled, and are less segregated than traditional urban women; on the other hand, they tend not to inherit as the Quran says they should. The virtual universality of these nomadic practices in the Middle East and their congruity with the tribal-nomadic way of life, which does not permit women to be idle or segregated but also discourages releasing the family's limited property into the hands of the new family that the bride joins, suggests that such conditions go back in time.

*Ibid.*, 34. Elsewhere she notes in a discussion of "pre-modern Iran" (up to 1921): "Tribeswomen went unveiled (as did many village women), rode horses, shared in much of the work of the tribe, and often managed their husbands' affairs when the latter were away": "Iran, 1797-1941," pp. 137-157 in *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society. Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1980), 142.

<sup>68</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 47-48.

<sup>69</sup> Bausani writes: "Sheep-farmers ... paid a tax called *chobān-begī*, which consisted of one seventh of the wool sheared, one in seven of newborn lambs, and one-third of the value of colts and asses": *The Persians*, 149. This tax is mentioned by name by Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 774. Chardin describes a one-third tax "on wool (*la toison*) and offspring (*la portée*)": *Voyages*, V, 392. These may have been levied on peasant shepherds rather than tribespeople; it is also unclear who (the chiefs or the state) collected this tax. Elsewhere, Chardin says the shah levied a one-seventh tax on all animals, especially provided by the tribes, it would seem. He had seen camps of 2,000 people with animals that covered the horizon as far as the eye could see, and took two to three hours to pass: *ibid.*, V, 397. Petrushevsky, writing of the fourteenth century (when tribal power was very strong), says tribespeople paid only a one percent tax on their herds: I. P. Petrushevsky, "The Socio-economic Condition of Iran under the Il-khāns," pp. 483-537 in J.A. Boyle, editor, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, volume 3, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 530 (hereafter cited as "Iran under the Il-khāns"). In the 1620s, on the other hand, Olearius was told that in a two-week period 100,000 sheep had passed over the bridge at Ardabil, brought by Turkish and Arabian shepherds, paying on each two pence for pasturage, and two pence later when sold: *The Ambassadors...*, 65.

extracted from the armed tribesperson than from the peasant (as we shall see), and in Bausani's judgment, "Few nomads, and then only the most wretched, ever settled on the land, and the condition of the settled peasant farmer was definitely worse than that of the nomad."<sup>70</sup>

In almost another world altogether were the tribal elite who occupied high military and provincial posts, and, to a lesser extent, those tribesmen who served in the army. When appointed by the state to a governorship or other administrative position, chiefs of tribes came into control over non-tribal sources of wealth, particularly in their capacity as the fiscal taxing agents and legitimate military power of the provincial bureaucracy. There is a major debate in the literature on the extent of their control over the Iranian economy, with Reid taking the position that it was (at least in the sixteenth century) virtually all-encompassing:

The qizilbāsh system was founded upon the principle of combining pastoral, agricultural, and urban communities under the leadership of tribal elites. The term "qizilbāsh" itself had been applied to a large and amorphous group who claimed to be followers of the Safavid religious order. In the sixteenth century, it was applied in Safavid Persia only to members of the military elite bearing the chief military status and the armies that supported them. The members of this military elite were also the heads of extensive commercial enterprises centered in great Safavid cities. From their houses (*sarāis*), which functioned as *bāzārs* and *kārvānsarāis*, they managed economic empires which stretched into the provinces and controlled agricultural, pastoral and manufacturing production. The qizilbāsh elite set themselves apart from the masses, divided society up into tribal spheres, and established tribal empires within the Safavid empire.<sup>71</sup>

This interpretation has been challenged on several counts. Helfgott insists that tribal chiefs' domination of agricultural units does not imply the "fusion of the pastoral and agrocentric economies on any level."<sup>72</sup> It was only in their capacity as provincial governors that tribal chiefs held political and taxing jurisdiction, and their holding of these posts was not formally or in practice hereditary, being subject to royal appointment and confirmation. Nor is it clearly established that the chiefs, even as provincial governors, really engaged in extensive urban commercial activities from their

<sup>70</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 150.

<sup>71</sup> James J. Reid, "Rebellion and Social Change in Astarābād, 1537-1744," pp. 35-53 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 13 (1981), 37. Cf. his view on the Safavid *uymāq* system as a pinnacle of some type: "The ultimate resolution in the conflict between pastoralists and the agrocentral societies of Iran was the formation of the *uymāq* system, the highest expression of which was the Safavid *uymāq* system": James J. Reid, "The Qajar Uymāq in The Safavid Period, 1500-1722," pp. 117-143 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XI (1978), 120. See also Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 48-49.

<sup>72</sup> Helfgott, "Tribalism as a Socioeconomic Formation," 74.

household compounds.<sup>73</sup> Rather than intervening actively in the production process, it seems that their main role was to extract a surplus in the name of the state from the urban and agricultural communities they (temporarily) administered. Finally, both Reid and his critics would agree that tribal domination of the rest of society reached its peak by the end of the sixteenth century, losing its hegemony to the shah after 1590 or so.

The tribal troops who served in the provincial armies and/or on the major campaigns of the shah, may be presumed to have had a higher standard of living than the average pastoralist. In any case, "The condition of the nomads (*ilāi*), who formed the backbone of the feudal army, was considerably better than that of the peasants (*ra'īyat*), who suffered from the usual impositions of a feudal economy."<sup>74</sup> Tribal troops were far more likely to be involved in a money economy and likely had rather different chances of social mobility than the ordinary shepherd. Of course, only a fairly small proportion of all tribesmen could have served in the army (up to 60,000 out of our estimated three million tribespeople).<sup>75</sup>

The tribal political economy of seventeenth-century Iran thus exhibited tensions between its traditional egalitarianism and growing stratification at several levels. At the economic base, tribal members were connected to one another and to their immediate chiefs through the necessary self-reliance and "rough democracy" of pastoral life.<sup>76</sup> As we have seen, taxes were perhaps not

<sup>73</sup> Significant questions about the evidence provided by Reid on this score are raised by McChesney, "Comment on 'The Qajar Uymaq in the Safavid Period'," 96. See also *ibid.*, 92, 93, 100-102 for other criticisms.

<sup>74</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 143. Reid points out that "Most booty, however, was kept by the chieftains, their retainers, or their clients": *Tribalism and Society*, 10. He deciphers

... the tension between classes that existed in the conglomerate pastoral community governed by the chieftain and his retainers. Such a relationship between master and servant did not begin to grow until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Beginning about this time, and continuing on into the seventeenth century, there was a growing tendency to exclude the regular pastoralist from military service. If regular pastoralists were included in the army, they performed the less glorious military tasks.

*Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>75</sup> Keddie has drawn attention to a striking passage indicating that women may have taken part in battle in the early sixteenth century:

The Persian ladies themselves follow in arms the same fortunes as their husbands, and fight like men, in the same way as those ancient Amazons who performed such feats of arms in their time.

*Roots of Revolution*, quoting Caterino Zeno, "Travels in Persia," in Charles Grey, editor, *A Narrative of Italian Travels in Persia, in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1873), 59.

<sup>76</sup> The phrase "rough democracy" is Keddie's: "Iran, 1797-1941," 140-42. Fredrik Barth explains the egalitarian basis of camp life:

Unlike a sedentary community, which persists unless the members abandon their house and land and depart, a camp community of nomads can only persist through continuous re-affirmation by all its members. Every day the members of the camp must agree in their decision on the vital ques-

extortionate, and tribeswomen participated in economic life and were more equal with their male counterparts than elsewhere in Iranian society. These communal characteristics were nevertheless overlaid by the vast gap separating the high-level chieftains from the mass of ordinary tribespeople, a gap that spanned nearly the entire spectrum of the social structure, from the elite handful of provincial governors to the near subsistence-level existence of the basic producers. A further significant split was observed at the base between tribesmen living as pastoralists and those who served in the cavalry units of the Safavid army. There was thus objectively much inequality between chiefs and tribespeople, but cutting across this were the customary relations that permitted the extraction of a surplus from the pastoralists and the ties of tribal loyalty that made the troops a reliable instrument for extracting an even greater surplus from the peasantry.

### **III.B. The Peasant Sector**

As with the tribal population, the proportion and absolute numbers of Iran's settled peasantry in the Safavid era can only be very roughly estimated. If we accept the previous estimate of the tribal sector as 35 to 40 percent of the total, and the urban population (to be estimated later) was 10 to 15 percent, the peasantry would then be the largest single component of the population, at 45 to 55 percent of the total. Out of a population ranging from six to ten million people, then, we have high and low estimates of 2,700,000 to 5,000,000 peasants, with the figure of four million being perhaps a reasonable guess.

To better understand the location of not only this vast peasantry, but all sectors of the population, it is useful to consider some of Iran's basic geographical features as noted by W. B. Fisher (the reader may also refer to Maps 2.2, 2.5 and 2.6 in Appendix II):

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tion of whether to move on, or to stay camped, and if they move, by which route and how far they should move. These decisions are the very stuff of a pastoral nomad existence; they spell the difference between growth and prosperity of the herds, or loss and poverty.... The maintenance of a camp as a social unit thus requires the daily unanimous agreement by all members on economically vital questions.

*Nomads of South Persia. The Basseri Tribe of the Khamseh Confederacy* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 25-26.

The simplest fact about Iran is its pronounced physiography. An outer ring of mountain chains, reinforced to north and south by arms of the sea and by regions of pronounced climatic difficulty (winter temperature contrasts of the west, aridity on the east), together form a definitive unity that has relatively few counterparts elsewhere in the world. It is rare to be able to trace such a precise geographical boundary as that between Mesopotamian plain and Iranian mountain. Most geographical boundaries are in reality zones, though for convenience and clarity they are drawn on the map as lines, but in the case of Iran these zones happen to be extremely sharp and narrow, as Didalus Siculus pointed out centuries ago.

Human settlement in Iran is concentrated on the interior piedmont slopes of the north and west, and it extends through the outer Alburz piedmont to include the southern Caspian coastlands....

Climatically, whilst it is fundamentally part of the general Middle Eastern regime, Iran has wider extremes than are experienced in many other countries of that region.... In Iran it is as if all the main features of climate were exaggerated: great heat, enormous unreliability of rainfall, bitter cold, alternating calms and sustained windiness, regions with extremely wide seasonal fluctuations, and the unusual aberrant of the Caspian coastland with its almost monsoonal warmth and dampness.

The fact that Iran has few large rivers—and those of any great size flow either totally or in part outward into non-Iranian territory—is of considerable importance. There is no scope for the elaboration of a large-scale civilization or way of life based on control and utilization of a major waterway, either as a source of irrigation or as avenue of commerce. The pattern of existence sometimes termed “the great hydraulic civilization” has no place in Iran. Yet the scope and need for water management remains, and are achieved through relatively small scale, local efforts by means of *qanāt* [human-made, underground gravity-drained water channels]. Such a usage of natural water supplies produces a garden-like pattern of cultivation with very few of the larger-scale units that characterize many other irrigated parts of the world. Observers have frequently commented that Iran conveys the overall impression of a cluster of gardens, with pockets of local richness set as it were in a matrix of harsher, less tractable territory.<sup>77</sup>

Geography, geology and climate then have combined to provide the material basis for most of the constraints of Iranian social structure and political economy over the last five hundred years (and longer): 1) dispersed peasant villages engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry in the plains and valleys, 2) nomadic tribespeople practicing pastoralism between summer camps in the mountains and winter camps on the plateau, 3) regions of mixed agriculture and pastoralism in the transitional zones (Kurdistan, Luristan, Gorgan, the Mughan steppe), 4) a silk-, rice- and tea-producing enclave in the damp, wooded environs of the Caspian shore, and, as we shall see, 5) towns built to coordinate local markets, 6) larger urban emporia on the major international trade routes linking east and west (with north-south travel being rather more difficult), and finally, much later, 7) an oil-rich enclave in the

<sup>77</sup> W. B. Fisher, “The Personality of Iran,” pp. 717-740 in W. B. Fisher, editor, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, volume 1, *The Land of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 734-36.

arid south-west.

A comprehensive list of the major crops grown is provided by Petrushevsky: wheat and barley in most areas; rice (along the Caspian, parts of Azarbaijan, Persian Iraq, Fars and Khuzistan); cotton (in Fars, Kirman, Khurasan, Khuzistan, Gurgan, Mazandaran, Gilan and Azarbaijan); vegetables (including cucumbers, cabbages, carrots, onions, garlic, rue, beets and legumes); fruits (melons, figs, peaches, apricots, plums, pears, apples, pomegranates, mulberries and grapes); nuts (almonds, walnuts, pistachios); saffron; sesame (the major source of oil); a little hemp and some opium; and various dye-stuffs (madder, henna and indigo).<sup>78</sup> As we shall see, silk was a major export crop. In terms of regions, Chardin singles out Armenia, Azarbaijan, Georgia, Mazandaran, Khurasan and Khuzistan as the most fertile.<sup>79</sup>

The basic agricultural unit was the village, of which there were thousands scattered and clustered around the country.<sup>80</sup> Lambton and other scholars infer that the original village settlements were communal, but landlords had come to be superimposed on them from very early times.<sup>81</sup>

Minorsky, following Chardin, notes four categories of land in Safavid Iran:

<sup>78</sup> Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 500-503. Though this list is based on fourteenth-century sources, it doubtless applies in the main to the 1620s as well. Lambton writes that generally, "The main crops grown on the plateau are wheat, barley, millet, maize, lucerne, pulses of different kinds, cotton, tobacco, opium, fruit trees, and vines": Ann K.S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia. A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 1-2. The seventeenth-century traveller Kaempfer mentions rice, millet, cotton, beans, fenugreek, melons, pumpkins, opium and corn, in a discussion of crop-sharing: Engelbert Kaempfer, *Amoenitatum Exoticarum politico-physico-medicae fasciculi V* (Lemgoviae, 1712), cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 22.

<sup>79</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 292-93. He also writes:

There (close to Bandar 'Abbas, on the Gulf) I found wheat being cut, and as three weeks earlier I had seen wheat being sown around Persepolis (in Fars), I thought to myself what a remarkable curiosity, to see wheat being sown after mid-February, and cut before the middle of March. That has happened to me several times, while travelling in Persia, in a similar period of three weeks. I would see the earth being worked in one place, two days further seed being scattered; several days later I would see it come up; then, continuing on my journey, I would see it as grass, then flowering, then ripe, then cut, then threshed: which is owing to what I have observed elsewhere [III, 272], that the Persian empire is so vast, that winter and summer occur there at the same time, one on one side, the other on the other...

*Ibid.*, VIII, 498.

<sup>80</sup> According to Chardin, "the Persian geographers" counted some 60,00 villages in Iran: *The Travels of John Chardin in Persia, containing a description of Persia in General* (London: J. Smith, 1720), volume II, 8. This tallies remarkably well with the 1966 census, which found 66,756 villages under 5,000 people (73 percent of them under 250 people): Eric J. Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960-1980* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 5.

<sup>81</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 5-6. Private landownership dates from at least Sasanid times, i.e. by the fifth or sixth century A.D. Petrushevsky reports that the ancient village commune seems to have disappeared by the Mongol period (thirteenth/fourteenth centuries):

... we did not chance upon any material descriptive of life in the commune in the sources, although we are told here and there of conflicts and lawsuits between commune and landowner. We completely failed to find any mention of the periodic redistribution of land or about communal crop-rotation; it is evident that both had disappeared about the beginning of this period. The impres-

(a) the state lands, which were the majority; they were in the temporary possession of the governors, who assigned a part of them to their own staff; (b) the demesnes, i.e. the Shah's own lands; of them some formed the appanage of certain charges and the others were assigned to the members of the Private Household and the troops maintained by the Shah; (c) the lands belonging to the Church, i.e. the endowments (*vaqf*) of the Shahs or private persons; (d) the lands "belonging" to private persons.<sup>82</sup>

Before turning to the situation of the peasantry we shall outline the historical development of each of these types of land and their main features in the Safavid period, beginning with the shah's own holdings.

The crown lands (*khassa* or *khaliseh*) were the personal estates of the ruler and his family. According to Lambton, data from the pre-Achaemenid period (second millenium B.C.) indicate that "all land belonged to the king, and was only held as a grant or fief by his subjects."<sup>83</sup> With the Islamic conquest of Iran in the seventh century A.D., the crown lands of the last pre-Islamic dynasty, the Sasanids, became theoretically the property of the whole Muslim community, but within a few generations they had shifted back to becoming in practice the private domains of the ruling family (Umayyads and then Abbasids).<sup>84</sup> In the eleventh century the Saljuqs brought certain steppe conceptions of land with them to Iran, considering the entire kingdom the domain of the khan/sultan (chief Saljuq), who could allot portions of it to his followers as he saw fit, and revoke the assignment at will: "Nizām ul-Mulk appears to have regarded the *sultān* as the sole owner of the soil."<sup>85</sup> Crown land, then, was usually made out of lands confiscated from the preceding dynasty and its officials, generals and perhaps landlords, and was always important throughout Iranian history.

In Safavid times, too, the somewhat ambiguous concept of the shah as theoretical owner of all land was maintained, with various internal contradictions and impingements of reality. This claim is perhaps seen most clearly in the notion that all uncultivated ("dead") lands belonged either to the shah or the state (and ultimately, indirectly to the shah). To occupy such land it was necessary to

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sion is created that the village commune was in a state of decline under the Mongols. "Iran under the Il-khāns," 523.

<sup>82</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 195. Chardin's discussion is found in volume V of his *Voyages*, 380ff. Petrushevsky discerns the same four categories of land for the fourteenth century: "Iran under the Il-Khāns," 515.

<sup>83</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 11.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 61, also 59-60.

obtain a grant from the local governor or the shah, and then receive a 99-year lease in return.<sup>86</sup> Banani notes too that "By sanctioning the more autocratic and arbitrary power of the king, Shi'ism allowed the concept of the ruler as the sole landowner to emerge more fully."<sup>87</sup> In practice however the extent of crown lands fluctuated in the Safavid period: most of the very valuable land around Isfahan belonged to the shahs, and the silk-producing regions of Gilan and Mazandaran passed to 'Abbas in 1595-96; 'Abbas then converted his private estates into an endowment (see the discussion of waqf, below) in 1607; and after 'Abbas's death much of the state lands were transferred to the personal control of the later Safavid shahs (discussed in Chapter Three). The theory of a royal land monopoly was perhaps best honored in the breach, but the shahs did on the whole dispose of large tracts of Iran's best agricultural land. As noted above, the revenues from these lands were used partly to pay salaries at court, partly to maintain the new standing army, and what remained went into the royal treasury.

A second major category of land was state land (*mamalik* or *divani*), whose taxes and rent were due to the public treasury, not to the shah's own treasury (though the distinction was often rather blurred). Shortage of cash in the underlying natural economy forced all dynasties from the Abbasids in the tenth century onwards to use state lands for the payment of the bureaucracy and military. This was done in the tenth through the fourteenth centuries through the *iqta'*, a grant of land revenues contingent upon military or administrative service which could be revoked, passed on to whomever in the family was best qualified, gave fiscal but not administrative immunity, and was subject to yearly inspection by the state.<sup>88</sup> Theoretically, then, as both Nizam al-mulk in the late eleventh century and Ghazan Khan's 1303 decree make clear, the assignee (*iqta'-dar* or *muqta'*) had no claims on the land itself or the cultivators.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, in practice the assigness continually strove to

<sup>86</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 382-83. Such lands might be alienated permanently however, to the individual developing them: B.G. Martin, "Seven Safawid Documents from Azarbayjan," pp. 171-206 in S.M. Stern, editor, *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, First Series, Oriental Studies, III (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1965), 192.

<sup>87</sup> Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 94.

<sup>88</sup> Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 519; Ann K.S. Lambton, "The Evolution of the *Iqta'* in Medieval Iran," pp. 41-50 in *Iran* (Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies), volume V (1967), 45.

<sup>89</sup> Thus, according to Nizam al-mulk,

Let the assignees who have *iqta'*s know that they have no authority over the peasants beyond this, that they should take the due amount which has been assigned to them from the peasants with civility, and that when they have taken that, the peasants shall be secure in their persons, and their money, wives, children, goods, and estates, and the *muqta'*s [assignees] have no claim over them.

exercise control over "their" peasants, claiming certain seignorial-type rights of legal and police jurisdiction, and ultimately permanent rights to the land itself: "the tendency of the function of the provincial military commander, the tax-collector, the tax-farmer, and the *muqta'* to be combined in one person led to the emergence of large properties, virtually independent of the central government."<sup>90</sup>

After the mid-fourteenth century, under the Jalayirids (and also in the Timurid east and later Qara Qyunlu and Aq Qyunlu western states) the term *suyurghal* (Mongolian for "bestowal" or "donation") replaced *iqta*, and this term continued in use through Safavid times.<sup>91</sup> Though there remains some ambiguity in the secondary literature, it would seem that *suyurghals* were sometimes hereditary grants of state land in return for provision of a specified number of troops, and sometimes grants of land or their revenues in lieu of salary or simply because the recipient enjoyed the shah's favor. An example of the first type is the 1702 communication from Shah Sultan Husayn to Amir Bayandur Sultan, the governor of Qarajadagh, which is in the nature of a contract—revenues for military service—the sum being 6 tumans 3096.5 dinars for the provision of "seven men fully armed and equipped" during the shah's campaigns; it was to pass from father to son unless there was no heir, in which case it was to stay in the family, if possible.<sup>92</sup> An example of the last type is Shah Tahmasp's confirmation of a *suyurghal* to the family of a Shaykh Husayn by Sultan Haidar (Shah Isma'il's father) in 1483; the recipients are descendants of Shaykh Zahid Gilani and thus religious

Let the *muqtā's* know that the kingdom (*mulk*) and the subjects (*ra'īyat*), all belong to the *sultān*... Cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 66. Minorsky too cites this passage, and adds:

Ghāzān khan's equally famous law of 703/1303 concerning military fiefs also stipulates that the *iqṭādārs* "should not say: 'The peasants of these places have been given to us by virtue of *iqṭā*; they are our slaves. The military have no other power over the peasants than to see that they cultivate their fields and to take from them the [legal] share in kind and the *divan* [state] revenue;" and further: "if the members of the army take from the peasants more than is specifically indicated in the General Register of taxes ... they will be guilty,—for we have not given the peasants to the army."

Cited in *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 28.

<sup>90</sup> Lambton, "The Evolution of the *iqṭā'*," 45. Further evidence that the local amirs saw themselves as land-owners is provided by Noman: "According to an Arab historian a military *iqṭa'* holder in Syria during the Seljuqs had stated that '*iqṭa'* is our private estate, and our sons will inherit it, from father to son, and we are ready to fight for it'": Farhad Noman, "The Origin and Development of Feudalism in Iran: 300-1600 A.D.," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (1972), 61 note 106.

<sup>91</sup> Petrushevsky notes the change from *iqṭa'* to *suyurghal*: "Iran under the Il-khāns," 520.

<sup>92</sup> Vladimir Minorsky, "A *Soyūrghāl* of Qāsim b. Jahāngīr Aq-qoyunlu (903/1498)," pp. 927-960 in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, volume XI (1937-1939), 959.

dignitaries honored by the Safavid royal family.<sup>93</sup> Suyurghals exhibited considerable continuity in their holders, though they also tended to disperse among the numerous descendants of the original grantee after several generations.<sup>94</sup>

The key form that state land assumed in Safavid times was the *tiyul*; Minorsky declares it was "Much more general and frequent" than the *suyurghal*.<sup>95</sup> Lambton, Minorsky and Bausani agree that it took two principal forms: the revenue on large grants of state land to the provincial governors in their own outlying areas, and revenues on lands designated to pay the salaries of specific offices in the army and bureaucracy.<sup>96</sup> *Tuyuls* were not (in theory) hereditary, and "In no case was there any question of administrative exemptions or concessions. In other words, institution of the *tuyul* was an attempt on the part of the central government to restore the system of the *iqta'* to its original form as a temporal benefit."<sup>97</sup> A royal decree (*farman*) of 1698 confirms a son in the *tiyul* of his father, and stipulates the following terms, duties and advice:

Let him show excellent efforts in the ordering of the army, the collection of revenue, and the cultivation of the districts of his *tuyul*, and hold ready as entered (against his name) in the *dīvān*), forty-seven men, fully equipped and armed, and let him so treat the soldiers, *kadkhodās* [village headmen] and peasants that all should be satisfied with his good treatment of them, and return thanks so that prayers for the well-being of the person of our blessed, successful and illustrious prince (*navvāb*) shall be made. Let the elders (*rīsh safidān*) and peasants of the above-mentioned districts consider the said person as their governor possessing full powers. Let them not contravene his words or what he considers advisable and let them consider necessary obedience and devotion to him.<sup>98</sup>

This suggests that though a *tiyul* might pass from father to son, this was contingent on the shah's decision. It also implies that the *tiyul*-holder did possess considerable authority over the peasants on the property, but this too derived, at least in theory, from the shah.<sup>99</sup> Other indirect evidence of the

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 956-957.

<sup>94</sup> Martin discusses an "inalienable" *suyurghal* granted to one of the ulama at the Ardabil Shrine in 1509, which apparently remained in the family until 1600, was revoked for seven years, and restored after a new petition in 1607: "Seven Šafawid Documents," 205. Lambton illustrates the fragmentation of a *suyurghal* from one holder in 1638 to fourteen individuals (one not related) by 1704, four generations later: "Two Šafawid Soyūrghāls," pp. 44-54 in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, volume XIV (1952).

<sup>95</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 28. The term was first used in 1407 under the Timurids: V. Minorsky, article on "Tiyul," pp. 799-801 in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, first edition (London: Luzac, 1934), 800.

<sup>96</sup> Lambton, "The Evolution of the *iqta'*," 49; Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 28; Bausani, *The Persians*, 143.

<sup>97</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 143.

<sup>98</sup> Cited in Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 109-110.

<sup>99</sup> Minorsky discusses the extent of this quasi-feudal authority:

Olearius, 673, confirms that the assignees collected the taxes (Tribut) and had the rights of jurisdiction over the peasants, except that of capital punishment.... Chardin, p. 419, quotes the right of a

hold that the assignee had is the fact that several contemporary sources concur in noting that anywhere from double up to eight (and maybe more) times the amount nominally assigned as payment of salary was in fact collected.<sup>100</sup> This survey of the *tiyul* completes our assessment of the state lands, which according to Chardin, "contain the greatest part of the kingdom."<sup>101</sup>

The third major category of land in Safavid Iran after the royal domain and state lands was *vaqf* land. *Vaqf* (the plural is *auqaf*) was an endowment of land for some charitable or religious purpose. It thus supported some specified group of beneficiaries—often judges, high-ranking ulama or sayyids (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad), and also an administrator (*mutavalli*) who took a tithe from the income. It could not be sold or transferred, and paid no taxes to the state.<sup>102</sup> In 1607 Shah 'Abbas converted his entire personal estate into a *vaqf*, appointing himself as administrator, to be succeeded by each future reigning shah. This endowment included not only lands throughout Iran worth some 100,000 tumans, but also inns, bathhouses, markets, stores and personal belongings.<sup>103</sup> While a portion of his income thus went to the upkeep of shrines and pensions for the ulama, the royal family presumably continued to receive the bulk of it in their capacity as administrators, the purpose having been perhaps to avoid the moral opprobrium of wealth that was considered wrongfully acquired in the first place (i.e. by confiscation).<sup>104</sup> Other private landholders, often insecure in their title to the land, seem to have followed the royal cue and much new *vaqf* was created in their

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*tiyuldār* to live on local resources when he visits the land assigned to him, and to mulct [i.e., fine] disturbances. Consequently, the *tiyul* of Safavid times included some definitely seigniorial rights. *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 28-29.

<sup>100</sup> The evidence is assembled by Minorsky:

In [paragraphs] 92 and 93 [of the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*] two *tiyūls* nominally worth 80 and 15 tumans were estimated as bringing their beneficiaries correspondingly 127 1/2 and 92 1/3 tumans. Chardin, V, 417, heard that in some cases the income was 50 times higher than the nominal sum. Kaempfer, 97, records as a particular feature of the *tiyūl* that the assigned villages bring to the grantee a profit higher than his salary..., namely, double in the majority of places, but fivefold near Isfahan, sixfold near Kāshān and Shirāz and, in some places, eightfold.

*Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 152. In 1578-79 d'Alessandri noted that the cavalry were assigned villages for their pay, and "they extract a much larger sum, they themselves having the lands worked, and getting the triple out of it": cited in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1939), volume I, 53 note 1 (continued from 52).

<sup>101</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 380.

<sup>102</sup> Nomani, "Origin and Development of Feudalism in Iran," 33-34. Chardin writes that *vaqf* lands are sacred, and neither shah nor bestower has any right on them: *Voyages*, V, 381.

<sup>103</sup> See Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 535, 954, for details.

<sup>104</sup> Emerson reports a conversation the French traveller Thévenot had with a mulla, "who told him that prayers never were said on lands that belonged to the Shāh 'parce qu'elles sont hheram [sic], ... le Roi ... ne les a pas achetées, mais elles ne sont à lui que par usurpation'": "Ex Occidente Lux," 247, citing Jean Thévenot, *Suite du voyage de Levant, dans laquelle, ... il est traité de la Perse...* (Paris: Angot, 1674), book 3, chapter xi.

names. By this act they protected themselves from the possibility of confiscation, avoided payment of any taxes to the state, and gained moral approval with a minimum of cost at the same time that they avoided the consequences of Islamic partible inheritance law which would normally fragment estates in a few generations.<sup>105</sup> Ulama, too, were often appointed as administrators of *vaqf* land, thus increasing their economic leverage in the rural sector, a trend to which we will return. As a result of these processes, by the end of 'Abbas's reign, *vaqf* land had come to be quite extensive: "Apart from lands assigned to officials in lieu of a salary (*tiyūl*), *vaqf* lands constituted the principal category of land."<sup>106</sup>

The final type of land-holding to consider is private estates. Though it is impossible to know the extent to which individuals owned land unconditionally, there is ample evidence in the contemporary sources that they in fact did so. Both Du Mans and Tavernier, Frenchmen resident in seventeenth-century Iran, refer to the existence of *mulki arbab* ("the property of landlords") alongside *mulki shah*.<sup>107</sup> Chardin mentions private holdings, saying that they are the owner's for 99 years, during which time they are transferrable. After this period, they can be "leased" again by paying one year's revenue to the state; while some paid a small annual tax to the shah (of 40-50 sous per *jarib*), others paid nothing at all.<sup>108</sup> Monshi's chronicle, *The History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, makes reference to *qizilbash* "who had fiefs and private estates in the Marāgā area";<sup>109</sup> it also provides an example of a landed estate belonging to a woman: Hasan Khan Ustajlu (d. 1624/25),

<sup>105</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 113; Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 96; Nomani, "Origin and Development of Feudalism in Iran," 35. Chardin confirms that this was a good way to protect title, since even if land was ill-acquired by the original possessor (now the administrator), it remains *vaqf* permanently after one year has passed: *Voyages*, V, 381.

<sup>106</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 185.

<sup>107</sup> Both Frenchmen are cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 247. The references are to Du Mans, *Estat de la Perse en 1660*, 226-27, and Tavernier, *Voyages*, Book 5, chapter xi (1930 edition), 237.

<sup>108</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 381-382. Chardin also notes that uncultivated ("dead") lands might be occupied and developed by private individuals with a similar 99-year lease: *ibid.*, 382-383.

<sup>109</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 1016. Minorsky is relying on Monshi too when he writes:

Concerning the private land-owners we know very little. Some of them lived in the capital and were admitted to court. The 'Ālam-ārā [i.e., *History of Shah 'Abbas*] says, 122: "There was at the Court another category of noblemen belonging to the Tājik class; some of them tried to serve (*rāh-i khidmat dāshand*) and, although they did not attain any important posts, they acted as advisers at the royal assemblies and made themselves conspicuous by participating (in discussions)." The author [Monshi] quotes the names of a sayyid of Qum who was an important land-owner (*ṣahīb amlāk va raqabāt*), and of another gentleman of Kirman; both were spoken of as candidates to the post of Grand Vazir but never obtained it.

Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 16.

military commander at Hamadan, had retired a year or two before his death "and was living at Sāva on estates belonging to his wife, who was the daughter of Sultan Ḥaydar Mīrzā."<sup>110</sup> Savory too gives indirect evidence of private property at Isfahan by noting: "The [Chahar Bagh], said to have taken its name from four vineyards which the Shāh had to purchase in order to secure the right-of-way, was an avenue of majestic proportions."<sup>111</sup>

There was nevertheless a marked indeterminacy in the status of private landowning in Safavid and earlier times. The fact that many individuals constituted "their" land into vaqf endowments implies that they had the right to so alienate their possessions but also that they felt insecure in the first place.<sup>112</sup> Both Minorsky and Banani suggest that the state lands, royal domain and endowments limited the extent of private holdings.<sup>113</sup> This presumably refers to the periods of strongest Safavid centralization, for Iranian history has witnessed a recurrent land cycle tenure of conquest by a dynasty, land grants assigned as payment to troops and bureaucrats, followed by the gradual rise of private property-like holdings, and then re-conquest; Banani notes that "In the Safavid era the gamut was run once again."<sup>114</sup> In later Safavid times this privatization process seems to have overtaken both land held as tiyul and vaqf lands. Lambton notes in passing that military leaders and provincial governors tended to acquire *de facto* private holdings, but doesn't directly adduce evidence for this (and we have already noted the often as not non-hereditary nature of these posts).<sup>115</sup> In the case of vaqf properties, Banani argues that:

<sup>110</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 1262. The woman in question was thus the granddaughter of Shah Isma'il.

<sup>111</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 156.

<sup>112</sup> Though writing about a much earlier period (the eleventh century under the Seljuqs), Lambton makes the interesting observation that there were such things as title-deeds in some cases, but no orderly system of land registration; the deeds were often not transferred or cancelled when land changed hands, presumably leading to problems and disputes later on: *Landlord and Peasant*, 69.

<sup>113</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 19; Bausani, *The Persians*, 142.

<sup>114</sup> Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 94.

<sup>115</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 105-106; Lambton, "The Evolution of the *Iqlā'*," 49. Chardin writes: "... the lands which are assigned as salary are not under the king's inspection; they are like the property of the one to whom they are given. He arranges the revenues as he wishes with the inhabitants of the place and it is like our European *bénéfice*": *Voyages*, V, 418. On the other hand, he writes: "... as offices are a hereditary institution in the [Persian] empire, everyone considers his assigned land as his own property forever, because one hopes to remain in one's post till the end of one's life, and to perform so well in it that one's children will succeed to it": V, 419-420.

Increasingly, members of the religious class—particularly the *mujtahids* and *siyyids*—were appointed as *mutawallīs*. Certain local histories, notably those of Na'īn, Ardistān, Natanz, and Kāshān, shed light on the growing economic power of some *siyyid* families. They began as *mutawallīs* of *owqāf* endowed by others, continued to amass extensive private estates of their own, and emerged as the esquires of their region with paramount local socioeconomic and political powers.<sup>116</sup>

This observation is in fact based on the work of Lambton, who draws attention to the process of ulama gaining de facto control over endowments, and maintains that the key change in the composition of the landowning class in Safavid times was “the great increase in land held by members of the religious classes.”<sup>117</sup> Chardin in fact notes that “An infinite number of people live from the church properties, but none of them get rich from it, except the sadrs, their comptrollers, and those who are the administrators of properties, and distribute them to others.”<sup>118</sup> Two general conclusions may be drawn: the line between “usufruct” and “possession” was blurred, and the tendency to cross it probably increased in the later seventeenth century as the strong central control of ‘Abbas gradually weakened. For the period we are focusing on here—the 1620s—the principal categories of landholding were first, state lands assigned as *tiyuls*, followed by the royal domains and *vaqfs*, with private property probably last in extent.

We can turn now to the issues of surplus appropriation and the situation of the peasantry. Lambton describes Iranian village structure in the following very general terms (i.e. relevant not just to the Safavid period but right up to the twentieth century):

The population of the villages consists variously of the landlords (unless these are absentees), those who work or own the units into which village land is divided (who may be crop-sharing peasants, tenants, or peasant proprietors), agricultural labourers and squatters, artisans such as the carpenter and the blacksmith, officials such as the village headman, tradesmen such as the village shopkeeper, and members of the religious classes. All classes are not found in each village. For example, peasant proprietors are not normally found in the landlord villages, nor are there craftsmen, shopkeepers, or members of the religious classes in all villages.<sup>119</sup>

In Safavid times, since the division of labor may be presumed to have been less extensive than in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, villages consisting mainly of peasants cultivating fairly

<sup>116</sup> Banani, “Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia,” 96. One may ask if the areas mentioned are typical of a more general trend.

<sup>117</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 126. See also *ibid.*, 113.

<sup>118</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VI, 62.

<sup>119</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 9. See also Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 40, 62 note 22.

small plots for absentee landlords and assignees, with some artisanal activity on the side, were probably the norm.

Most lands, whether the shah's, private property, or *vaqf*, were rented to peasants according to a crop-sharing arrangement of some kind.<sup>120</sup> Paying a certain sum per amount of land used was usually only done around large towns, and even so was not particularly common.<sup>121</sup> More common, "almost universal" according to Minorsky, was the "association of the owner and the labourer in the partition of the harvest—*muzāra'a*."<sup>122</sup> One theory underlying the crop-sharing contract appears to have been that of the "five factors" (*'avamil-i panjgana*) of production: equal shares to the providers of land, water, plough-animals, seed and labor.<sup>123</sup> Thus, if the peasant provided only labor, he received twenty percent of the crop; if labor and oxen, forty percent; and so on. In practice, the proportion actually paid as rent varied to a considerable degree: on the royal domain, for example, Tahmasp in the sixteenth century received one-seventh of the produce;<sup>124</sup> Chardin says that the shah took one-third in the late seventeenth century;<sup>125</sup> while Thévenot, also writing in the seventeenth century gives both one-fifth and one-half as the shah's share.<sup>126</sup> There may thus have been an increase in the shah's proportion between the reigns of Tahmasp and 'Abbas.<sup>127</sup> Chardin writes of the shareholding contract (whether with the shah or a private landlord) that water and fertilizer may be provided by either party; after the harvest seed for the next year is removed, then usually the owner takes one-third, though sometimes one-fourth to one-half of the crop.<sup>128</sup> Kaempfer provides

<sup>120</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 384. See also Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 119.

<sup>121</sup> Vegetable-growing might be assessed in this way: "The rent of such market-gardening lands around Isfahan reached 30 écus (6600 dinars or 0.66 toman), and more, per 1 *jarīb* (measuring less than an arpent)": Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 21-22.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 22. Lambton argues from documents dated 1662 that landlords preferred a share of the crop to a lump sum: *Landlord and Peasant*, 113. Chardin writes that payment could be in kind or in money: *Voyages*, V, 392.

<sup>123</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 187. Minorsky observes that the five-factor system is not referred to in contemporary sources, but "the doctrine which it covers is undoubtedly of great antiquity and by its simplicity must have influenced Persian practice at all times": *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 22. See also Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 525.

<sup>124</sup> D'Alessandri, quoted in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, volume 1, 52: "on the produce of the soil, such as wheat and other grain, the king gets one-seventh"; cited also by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 123. This tallies with the fifteen percent sanctioned by the theologian al-Karaki during Tahmasp's reign: Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 193-194.

<sup>125</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 396.

<sup>126</sup> Thévenot, *Relation d'un voyage*, n.p., cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 247-248.

<sup>127</sup> This is the opinion of M. Ravandi, *Tarikh-i Ijtima'i-yi Iran* [Social History of Iran], second edition (Tehran, 1977), volume 3, 159, cited by Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 194.

the data shown in Table 2.6 for the shares on the royal domain around Isfahan.

Table 2.6  
Crop Shares on the Royal Domains

Crop	Shah's Share	Peasant's Share
"generally"	2/3 (land, seeds, water) 3/4 (the above, plus oxen, tools)	1/3 (labor, oxen, manure) 1/4
rice, millet, cotton, beans, melons	3/5	2/5
opium	17/28	11/28

Source: Kaempfer, *Amoenitatum...*, 91, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 22.

The landlord, whether the shah or a private individual, thus took the bulk of the agricultural produce of Iran; if the harvest was poor, the peasantry would face the prospect of starvation (though the chronicles record cases of tax relief,<sup>129</sup> and as we shall see below, there were means of recourse against excessive taxation).

The sharecropping agreement was not the peasant's only obligation to the controller of the land. Documents from 1513 and 1708 list a whole range of taxes and services, including: levies for the food of passing officials and fodder for their animals ('*alafeh* and '*ulufeh*), perquisites for tax-collectors (*haqq us-sa'i-yi 'ummal*), a levy for postal couriers (*ulagh*), guide service for officials (*ulam*), requisitions by the court (*taklif-i divani*), royal demands (*mutalibat-i sultani*), hunting dues or provision of "beaters" (*shikar*), provision for (or of) roadguards (*qarasuran*), and the omnipurpose "presents" (*pishkash*) and "extraordinary taxes" (*ikhraja*).<sup>130</sup> Chardin also notes that a

<sup>128</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 384.

<sup>129</sup> Monshi records tax breaks in 1598/99 and 1613-1616 at Isfahan, and in 1617/18 compensation for peasant losses due to Ottoman devastations in Azarbaijan: *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 774, 1073, 1158. In a bad harvest year ca. 1615-17:

... the crops in the Isfahan area were struck by blight, and the people were in distress. The Shah waived the *divān* dues for one year, and in addition paid cultivators of state lands a tithe of the income accruing from crops on crown lands. This bounty alleviated the lot of the peasants and of his subjects generally, and converted their expectation of scarcity into one of abundance.

*Ibid.*, 1103. Nevertheless, one imagines that such "good fortune" was a rare event.

<sup>130</sup> These are taken from a *suyurghal* of 1513 and a 1708 *farman* examined in Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 116-117. Minorsky analyzes an Aq-Quyunlu *suyurghal* from 1498 that specifically exempts the holder from thirty different types of tax, but concludes his discussion of them as follows:

On the whole, the long list of levies gives a curious picture of the vagaries obtaining in the financial life of a feudal Muslim principality. Very striking is the mixture of Mongol, Turkish, Arabic, and Persian terms, characteristic of the region of Mārdīn lying in high Mesopotamia and exposed to many invasions. However, it is quite possible that several of the levies had long been extinct and figured in documents only as conventional rhymes and embellishments, as was the case of the

tiyul-holder benefitted from expenses paid on any visit to his territory, and mentions his "seigneurial right" (*pors-i az al-neza'a*) to collect fines for various offenses.<sup>131</sup>

There is evidence that peasants did various types of labor service for the landowner, but since the landowner had no demesne of his own and was quite often absent, and thus played little role in the organization of production, it seems inaccurate to call this a feudal "corvée" in the European sense, as Chardin does. Referring to cheating and deception by the peasants on their cropsharing contract, he writes:

If the peasants fool their lord in this way, he is paid back by the corvées with which he burdens them. He employs them on the work he wants done on the property, buildings, gardens and elsewhere, or the village is required to give him a certain number of people per day without pay.<sup>132</sup>

Chardin moreover feels that these extra taxes and labor services are greater on the royal lands than those of private owners.<sup>133</sup> An Aq Qyunlu *suyurghal* dating from 1498 refers to *bigar*, which Minorsky glosses as "the bounden service of peasants, usually without pay."<sup>134</sup> The 1725 *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* notes that "The preparation of rolls of summonses of men with donkeys, men with picks, etc., who must be distributed among the community, is also done in the office of the Mustaufi of Iṣfāhan..."<sup>135</sup> This however might apply to the townspeople as well as the peasants. Finally, there is an example of *paid* "corvée" in *The History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*: in 1621/22, when the shah wanted to widen the roads in Mazandaran,

The inhabitants of the province were ordered to assist him [the vizier of Māzandarān, Mīrzā Taqī]. Laborers were to draw their wages in cash from funds made available from the royal treasury, and a start was made on the work.<sup>136</sup>

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European feudal charts.

Minorsky, "A Soyūghāl of Qāsim b. Jahāngīr Aq-Qoyunlu," 951.

<sup>131</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 419. See also footnote 98 above.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 390. The point about no demesne property or organization of agricultural production is made by Nomani, "The Origin of Feudalism in Iran," 76.

<sup>133</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 386-387.

<sup>134</sup> Minorsky, "A Soyūghāl of Qāsim b. Jahāngīr Aq-Qoyunlu," 950. He notes that Juvayni (1226-1283), author of the *Tarikh-i Jahan-Gusha* (History of the World Conqueror) "describes a *bigār-i nafsi* referring to personal services: 'if the man is not at home, his wife goes out in person and does the task'"; *ibid.* This was in Mongol times, when the peasantry was subjected to severe control by the state.

<sup>135</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 84.

<sup>136</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 1211-1212.

The picture that emerges from these data is of a variety of miscellaneous labor services imposed on the Iranian peasantry but probably not the equal, qualitatively or quantitatively, of the regular unpaid labor service on the feudal estates of Europe.

Peasants fought back against heavy exactions with the means at their disposal. In the first place, those who lived in more remote areas in the mountains or less fertile parts of the country tended to retain a measure of autonomy and more communal arrangements.<sup>137</sup> In the more numerous areas under direct control of the state and its assignees, one tactic was to claim that the crops had been partly lost due to dryness, cold, or insects. Chardin claims that this kind of fraud often worked against "the great lords" and the shah, and less often with the more attentive smaller-scale landlords.<sup>138</sup> Similar ruses as well as flight to avoid tax-collectors are detailed for earlier periods (the late tenth and early fourteenth centuries) by Lambton.<sup>139</sup> Estimates of what a given piece of land could be expected to yield were sometimes quite old, and hence underestimates, which could be to the peasant's advantage if part of the crop could be hidden. Moreover, deals were sometimes struck with administrators and financial agents sent out to investigate.<sup>140</sup> Finally, if a village or district had a complaint against a governor, or had had a bad crop, they might send large groups, sometimes up

<sup>137</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 7.

<sup>138</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 384-385, 386-387.

<sup>139</sup> According to the *Tarikh-i Qumm* (a history of Qum written in Arabic in the late tenth century, no longer extant except in a Persian translation dating from 1402-4):

[The peasants taught their children] as hunting hawks were taught when young to seek prey, to default on the *kharāj* [land tax]. They would take a switch, throw their small sons down and beat them, teaching them to say 'O God, O God, O master, consider my condition: in truth rust has attacked my grain and ruined it and the worm has got into my cotton land and eaten it and what remained locusts have devoured completely.'

And under the Mongol Il-khans, ca. 1300:

Such was the extortion practised by officials that on the approach of the tax-collectors the peasants would leave their villages. Rashid ud-Dīn relates that anyone visiting the villages of Yazd would not find a single person to speak to or from whom to inquire the way. The few persons who had remained in the villages would appoint watchmen. When warned of the approach of someone they would hide in the *kahrīz* [i.e. the underground water channels] or in the sand dunes. If any of the large landowners from Yazd went to see their villages, they would find them deserted. He tells the story of a landowner who went to Fīrūzābād, one of the large villages of Yazd, to see if he could collect something from the yield of an estate which he had there. For three days he tried in vain to get hold of one of the *kadkhudās*. All he found were seventeen tax-collectors with bills and drafts on the place waiting there. They had taken a *dashībān* [field watchman] and two peasants whom they had found in the fields, brought them into the middle of the village, where they had tied them up, and were beating them to induce them to produce food and to disclose the whereabouts of the other peasants.

Both cited in Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 46-47, 83.

<sup>140</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 386, 390.

to a thousand people, to the palace gates to engage in demonstrations to get the shah's attention.

Chardin describes this type of peasant demonstration at Isfahan:

The peasants therefore go to the court in a body, with all the proofs they can give of the calamity on the land ... gnawed-upon branches, hail-bitten stalks of grain, spoiled fruits, along with the testimony of local judges, and they assemble at the palace gate or wait for the king in the street, depending on what they have been advised to do, then they begin to shout with all their strength, throwing their turbans on the ground, tearing their clothes, and raising dust in the air. They sometimes shout so loudly they can be heard half a league away. The king never fails to send someone to inquire what it is: our peasants immediately give their complaint; and if the reply is long in coming, they begin shouting louder than before.<sup>141</sup>

In assessing the overall condition of Iran's peasantry in the seventeenth century, we are confronted by an evident sparseness of data.<sup>142</sup> The most celebrated contemporary judgment on the peasants' lot is offered by Chardin, given here in full:

They live well enough, and I can assure you that there are incomparably more wretched peasants in the most fertile regions of Europe. I have seen Persian peasant women everywhere with silver necklaces, and great silver rings on their hands and feet, with chains from neck to navel, laced with silver pieces and sometimes gold. One sees children likewise adorned, with coral necklaces. Both men and women are well dressed, with shoes; they are well furnished with utensils and furniture; but on the other hand (*en échange de ces aises*), they are exposed to the insults (*injures*), and sometimes the blows, of the king's men and vazirs, when they do not give quickly enough what is demanded, which holds for the men only; as for the women, they are respected throughout the Orient, and they are never touched.<sup>143</sup>

Minorsky notes: "Behind this curious oscillation of Chardin's judgment may lie the comparison which the clever observer could not fail to draw between Persia and pre-revolutionary France, where the condition of the peasantry was intolerable."<sup>144</sup> On the other hand, Chardin was a Protestant who never really found a secure niche in Catholic France and this may have colored his rather positive comparison with Europe's peasantry.<sup>145</sup> Bausani too tries to put Chardin in perspective by arguing:

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 389; also 281.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Minorsky: "Of the peasants, the most numerous class forming the basis of the Persian polity, we are unfortunately not adequately informed": *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 21. And Banani: "On the modes of production and the conditions of the peasants we have scant information": "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 97.

<sup>143</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 391-392.

<sup>144</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 23.

<sup>145</sup> See Langlès's "Abstrait de la vie du chevalier Chardin," in *Voyages*, I, xi-xviii, for glimpses of this possible bias. Chardin lived the last thirty years of his life in exile in England and Holland, where he wrote his *Voyages*.

The traveller Jean Chardin reported that in the flourishing oasis of Isfahān the peasants were better off than their contemporaries in France, but if this were true in the neighborhood of the cities, it did not apply to the whole of Iran.<sup>146</sup>

Chardin had however travelled in both the northwest and from Isfahan south to the Gulf more than once and he says in general:

Those [of the lowest rank] of Persia, either in the countryside, or in the cities, are well-nourished and well-clothed, having all the necessary utensils, even though they work not half as hard as our [poorest subjects].<sup>147</sup>

To fill in the picture of women offered by Chardin above, Keddie notes that peasant women, like tribal women, also participated in hard physical work and often went unveiled, and that "In tribal and village carpets and textiles most of the creativity in design and color had come from women down through the centuries."<sup>148</sup>

On the negative side, Chardin provides an indirect piece of evidence when listing the prices of barley (fodder), bread, mutton and poultry in Khuzistan in 1669: "One can judge what all this is worth to the peasant. However, it is said that the necessities are even less expensive at Candahar..."<sup>149</sup> As in pre-Safavid Iran, peasants would seem to have had three prospects: 1) extortionate high rents when the local notables wielded excessive power, 2) "normal" high rents when public order and central control were maintained, or 3) little or no rent when no one had control over their area.<sup>150</sup> Since in the 1620s most of Iran was effectively carpeted by royal domain, tiyuls and vaqfs the first two scenarios probably tended to obtain. B.G. Martin discusses a document from 1592 that refers to the "scattered peasants" of Kasaj in Khalkhal, who

... may well have fled their homes to escape the extortion of officials, or heavy taxation.... The existence of a horde of officials whose chief duty was to press the multifarious taxes, dues, tolls and other exactions out of the miserable peasants and crop-sharers must have signified widespread poverty and subsistence-level existence in the countryside.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 149-150.

<sup>147</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 465-466.

<sup>148</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 34.

<sup>149</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 293. Chardin's sense seems to be that prices are low, and I take this to imply that peasants can't be too well-to-do. Other interpretations are possible.

<sup>150</sup> These possibilities are suggested by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 73-74.

<sup>151</sup> Martin, "Seven Safawid Documents," 199.

The peasantry undoubtedly did live on the margins of subsistence, providing as it did the bulk of the state's revenues and supporting the army, much of the ulama, and private landowners. It is difficult to disagree with Bausani's conclusion: "the condition of the settled peasant farmer was definitely worse than that of the nomad."<sup>152</sup> On the other hand, general economic prosperity in the seventeenth century and strong central control most likely made the period one of relatively less exploitation for the peasantry as a whole, which Chardin's eyewitness accounts tend to substantiate.

### III.C. The Urban Sector

As with the tribal and peasant sectors, the extent of the Iranian urban population in the seventeenth century can be estimated only very crudely. According to Minorsky, the English traveller Sir Thomas Herbert, "who probably echoes some official tradition of 'Abbas I's time, [estimates] there were in Persia 90 walled towns and about 40,000 villages."<sup>153</sup> Based largely on Emerson's excellent compilation of contemporary European estimates I have constructed Table 2.7, which indicates the populations for most of the chief urban places. This list is partial, and does not include such major cities as Mashhad, Herat and Hamadan, or a number of significant towns, including Marv, Nishapur, Dizful, Kirmanshah, Khuy, Tiflis, Darband, Baku, Erivan, Maragheh, Rasht, Lahijan, Damghan, Astarabad, Ganjeh, Semnan, Sabzavar, Birjand, Kazirun, Ahvaz, Shushtar, Sanandaj, Tabas, Bam, Na'in and others.<sup>154</sup> Nevertheless, Isfahan, Tabriz, Qazvin and Shiraz were most likely the four largest cities of seventeenth-century Iran, and most of the others listed probably stood roughly in the proportion and ranking that appears in the table. Though each city and region have their own particular demographic and economic histories to tell, urban population as a whole was

<sup>152</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 150.

<sup>153</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 162, citing Sir Thomas Herbert, *Some Yeares Travels*, third edition (1665), n.p.

<sup>154</sup> Hamadan, for example, is called by Tavernier "one of the largest and most considerable cities of Persia" (*Les six voyages...* (1679), book 2, chapter V, 206) and by Thévenot "a very large city" (*Voyages...* (Amsterdam: La Cène, 1727), volume III, 237): both are cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 237. Tiflis, in Kartlia (Georgia), had 14 churches, and "although 'fort peuplée' and 'une des plus belles villes de Perse' it was 'pas fort grand'," according to Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 237, citing Chardin, *Voyages*, II, 72, 80-81, 86. Erivan, in Armenia, was "a large city" with a Persian garrison of 2,000 men, plus several churches and two mosques: Chardin, *Voyages*, II, 161-166, cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 232. Avril, who had been to Erzerum, Diyarbakir and Aleppo, praises the bazaars of Ganjeh as the best in the East: *Travels into divers parts...*, 71-71, cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 232.

Table 2.7  
Population Estimates of Major Iranian Cities, Seventeenth Century

City	# of Households	# of People
Isfahan		225-500,000
Tabriz		150,000 (?)
Qazvin	12,000	72-100,000
Shiraz	12,000	(72,000)
Shamakhi	4-12,000	50-60,000
Ardabil		50,000+ (?)
Kashan	4-6,500	(24-39,000)
Tehran/Rey	3,000	(18,000+)
Sultaniyeh	3,000	6-18,000
Marand	2,500	(15,000)
Abhar	2,500	(15,000)
Farsajin	(2,500)	(15,000)
Qom	2,000	(12,000+) (?)
Nakhijavan	2,000	(12,000)
Zanjan	2,000	(12,000)
Kirman		10,000+ (?)
Yazd		10,000+ (?)
Bandar 'Abbas	14-1500	(8,400-9,000)
TOTAL		776,400-1,089,000

Sources: Chardin, *Voyages*, II, 297-98, 320, 374, 376-77, 387-88; VII, 273-74; VIII, 134-35, 414, 435-36, 508; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 233-37, 240; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 169; Olearius, *The Ambassadors...*, 69, 79; Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 1046; Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 507; Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safawids*, 43 note 2, 44 note 4.

undoubtedly growing rapidly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries after the Mongol devastations of the mid-thirteenth century had de-urbanized Iran. At a very rough guess, then, if we take the conservative figure of about one million people for the urban population (based on our low figure above and taking into account the two dozen small and medium-sized cities not in the table), we arrive at an urban population of at least 10 to 15 percent (out of six to ten million) in the seventeenth century. For contemporary pictures and sketches of some of these towns, the reader is referred to Appendix I.

Petrushevsky, writing on the fourteenth-century Iranian towns, discerns three types of city: 1) "many" small and medium sized ones engaged in local trade and commerce; 2) some moderate centers of craft industry for the national and world markets, including Kashan (ceramics, silks, carpets), Yazd (silk) and Kazirun (flax-spinning); and 3) city-emporia on the major trade routes—

Tabriz, Qazvin, Isfahan, Shiraz, Hamadan, Nishapur, Maragheh and also the island of Hormuz. These last sometimes had craft industries too, such as cotton and silk-weaving at Isfahan, and iron goods, wool-weaving and aromatic essences at Shiraz.<sup>155</sup> For our purposes, the urban sector will be analyzed according to its main economic agents and activities: the workshops and trade of the "private sector," the royal workshops and the Safavid-dominated international trade.

### III.C.1. The "private sector"

The analysis in this section focuses on the main social and economic activities of the "private" or non-royal, sector of the urban population: above all, the guilds and craft production, the merchants and internal trade, and some key remaining urban groups—the ulama, lower classes, minorities and women.

The primary locus and real underpinning of the seventeenth-century urban economy were the guilds (*asnaf*, sing. *sinf*). These possessed a degree of self-administration within the broader context of firm Safavid control of urban government as a whole.<sup>156</sup> Key urban officials included the *kalan-tar*, the chief municipal officer or "mayor", responsible for a range of security, administrative and taxing functions;<sup>157</sup> the *naqib*, his deputy or assistant, appointed by the shah to supervise master-apprentice relations and participate in determining guild taxes;<sup>158</sup> the *darugha*, in charge of public

<sup>155</sup> Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 506; in his judgment,

There is no doubt that the great city-emporiums by far surpassed the greatest cities of Western Europe of the late medieval period, such as Venice, Milan, Florence or Paris, in the scale of their economic activities and their populations (at least before the Mongol invasion).

*Ibid.*, 506-507.

<sup>156</sup> Bausani observes that the guilds in Safavid times had more influence in running their cities than in the Seljuq or Il-khanid periods, but that cities were not generally self-governing: *The Persians*, 151-152. Lambton speaks of "a considerable measure of self-government" in the towns in Iranian history generally: *Islamic Society in Persia*, An Inaugural Lecture delivered on 9 March 1954 at the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954). Petrushevsky notes that towns had no "overall self-government" before or after the Mongols—"There was however self-administration within the limits of the quarter ... and the guild or corporation—either merchant, craft, or religious": "Iran under the Il-khāns," 509.

<sup>157</sup> The somewhat contradictory range and complexity of the *kalan-tar*'s functions are conveyed by Lambton's citations from contemporary European sources (Fryer, Tavernier and Comeille le Brun): *Islamic Society in Persia*, 11-12. See also Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 81-82, 148-149, on the *kalan-tar*'s responsibility for protection of the population against "the powerful" and probable election from among the local notables. On balance, the office seems nevertheless to have been an arm of the state: Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 182.

<sup>158</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 83, 148-149; Mehdi Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life in the later Safavid period. Contribution to the socio-economic history of Persia*, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, volume 65 (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1982), 67-68.

order and responsible for security in the bazaar, assisted by the nightwatchman,<sup>159</sup> and the *muhtasib*, who supervised the price-setting process in negotiations with the elders of each guild, and enforced prices, weights and measures and public morality generally.<sup>160</sup> Each of the major guilds had a government-confirmed guild representative, known as its *bashi* (chief), who represented the state in its dealings with the guilds. The *bashis'* popular counterpart were the *kadkhudas* (headmen), chosen from among the masters of each guild based on "skill, merit and high standing."<sup>161</sup> Each guild had a kind of court or council consisting of its elders (*rish safids*), presided over by its *kadkhuda*, which could try members for violations of the orally-transmitted guild code, and for any violation of a small nature (more serious crimes being brought before the *kalantar*, or by the *kalantar* to the governor).<sup>162</sup> The guilds fulfilled a range of social, cultural and religious functions, of which the welfare of their members, collectively and individually, was perhaps the most significant.<sup>163</sup> The important issue of the tax assessment (*bunicha*) was a matter of negotiation between the *kadkhudas* of the guilds and the *naqib* representing the government; in the words of the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, "To (their) mutual satisfaction he fixes the *bunīcha* of each [guild] in conformity with the Law (*qānūn*), Right, Reason and the customs and rules of the realm."<sup>164</sup> The *kadkhuda* then apportioned the total

<sup>159</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 70-71; Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia*, 14-15. Minorsky calls him the "Prefect of Police" and notes his high salary of 300-500 tumans, with "many opportunities for further enrichment": *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 149.

<sup>160</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 83; Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 69-70. Lambton provides a detailed list of tasks based on a royal decree of 1662: *Islamic Society in Persia*, 13.

Keyvani writes: "In the Safavid period, prices in the large cities were in principle controlled by the *muhtasib*, but were in fact mainly determined by the guilds": *Artisans and Guild Life*, 116. The guild leaders (*kadkhudas*) suggested prices for foodstuffs on a weekly basis to the *muhtasib*, who fixed his seal and sent the list to the *nazir-i buyutat* (head of the royal workshops) for another confirming seal. Price control was, however, used to limit social unrest. Fluctuations in the weather and natural disasters put pressures on prices, which the government could always step in to control, as in the 1661 famine at Isfahan and the bad harvest of 1668: *ibid.*, 115, 118.

<sup>161</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 82-87.

<sup>162</sup> Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia*, 21-22.

<sup>163</sup> Most guilds had "a complex of public buildings usually comprising a mosque, public bath (*ḥammam*), theological college (*madrasa*), gymnasium (*zūr-khāna*), and drinking fountain (*saqqā-khāna*)": Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 142. These were often built by the wealthiest members of the guild. Though the documentary evidence is somewhat scanty, Keyvani thinks that "mutual help and cooperation were important moral and social functions": *ibid.*, 144. Wealthier members helped the poor and ill of the guild, and widows.

Sometimes this help was given in fulfillment of personal obligations to professional colleagues, but generally it was given for the sake of maintenance of the guild's dignity and above all from respect for the religious and moral duty of charity.

*Ibid.*, 147. In eastern Iran in the sixteenth century, guilds ransomed members captured by Uzbek, Turkmen and Afghan raiders: *ibid.*, citing N. A. Kuznetsova, "Urban industry in Persia during the 18th and early 19th centuries," pp. 308-321 in *Central Asian Review*, volume XI, number 3 (1963), 318-319.

<sup>164</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 83.

tax among the members of his guild, each paying according to his amount of business.<sup>165</sup> Certain guilds performed unpaid labor services for the court, most notably the skilled tailors of Kashan and Isfahan who had to provide the robes of high officials free of charge, and the carpenters and masons of the capital who were called upon to construct palaces and repair government buildings.<sup>166</sup> The overall picture that emerges suggests a tension between an unusually strong central government whose mechanisms of control included some influence over prices and quality with an ability to tax and demand significant labor services, and guilds with a measure of internal autonomy, against a general background of economic expansion that probably allowed all parties to benefit.

Internally, in a guild there were three levels or grades of workers: apprentice (*shagird*), journeyman or pre-master (*khalifa*) and master (*ustad*). Often a craft remained in the family, with father taking on son as an apprentice, though obviously there were cases where masters took on others, or their sons were apprenticed to another craft.<sup>167</sup> Apprenticeship began either at age six, or at 12-15, if the boy went to school, as the sons of masters generally did; its length varied by craft, and could be three to ten years.<sup>168</sup> After the apprenticeship one became a master with the approval of the guild's *kadkhuda* and endorsement of the *naqib* and *kalantar*, which in some cases depended on the approval of two-thirds of the guild's masters.<sup>169</sup> According to Petrushevsky,

... *khalīfa* was the title of a person who had qualified as a master but who did not have the means to start his own *dukkān* [shop] and who worked for another craftsman. When a *khalīfa* was able to start his own shop he required no new initiation...<sup>170</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Thévenot, *Suite du voyage de Levant* (Paris, 1674), 165, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 148 note 2. Chardin however reports a uniform tax on artisans' shops of 10 sous (1/90 of a tuman) per year, an implausibly small amount: *Voyages*, V, 399 (Iranian equivalent provided by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 180).

<sup>166</sup> Keyvani, *Guilds and Artisan Life*, 106-107. Minorsky writes:

According to Le Brun, 297, Shah Sultan Ḥusayn's passion for new palaces and gardens cost him nothing. "When he has an inclination to erect any new edifice, his will is made publicly known by sound of trumpets, that such as are attached to his interest may attend and contribute towards the completion of the intended building. Upon this general summons, artificers of all sorts flock to the Court from all parts in order to offer their service, through loyalty, without any expectation, or hope of reward; nor do the grantees, or lords of the court, ever fail to send other workmen at their expense." As the grantees themselves drew most liberally on the labour services of their subjects, one need not imagine that the labour they procured for their sovereign caused them much expense.

*Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 181-182, citing C. Le Brun's *Travels*, English translation (1759).

<sup>167</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 88-89, based on Tavernier, *The six voyages...* (1678, 1930), 34.

<sup>168</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 89-90.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 93. "The initiation of a master necessitated a threefold act: the reading of the first *sura* of the Qur'ān, the tying on of a belt (*kamarbandī*), and a ritual feast, called *arvāḥ-i pīr*": Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 512 note 2.

<sup>170</sup> Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 512 note 2. Keyvani says a *khalifa* was "a fully trained man who had acquired all the arts and techniques of his craft or profession... The *khalifa* is qualified to act as his master's

Further evidence of stratification within a shop is provided by Olearius:

Most Handycraft Trades have their Work done by their Apprentices or Slaves, whilst they are employed in selling their Commodities in their vaulted Shops within the Market-places, or the circumjacent Streets; where each Trade has its peculiar Quarter, or perhaps a whole Street assign'd it...<sup>171</sup>

There were however virtually no "slaves" engaged in urban craft production in the private sector, and it must be the case too that masters did far more than merely sell the product. There was also a group of skilled and unskilled laborers who worked more or less outside the guild system:

In 17th and 18th century Iran ... there was a large category of workmen who had no permanent shops, but were occupants of temporarily rented shops or booths, or were itinerant day laborers going from town to town or town to village or house to house. Workers in this category were called *muzdvar* (hired man) or *kārgar* (daily paid labourer). Some were artisans and traders who had valuable skills but did not possess fixed establishments. The existence of this group must not be overlooked in studies of the evolution of Iranian society.... The socio-economic system of the Safavid period promoted a multiplication of street artisans (*muzdvarān*), whose services were used mainly by the lower income groups in the cities and suburbs and by peasant families, because they could supply basic needs much more cheaply than their shop-owning counterparts in the bazaars....

There were also groups of artisans, known as *khāna-kārān*, who had no fixed shop and worked for hire at customer's [sic] houses. According to Chardin, there were large numbers of these artisans in Isfahān, such as goldsmiths, coppersmiths, carpenters, etc. Some of them were respected and prosperous craftsmen who worked at the houses and establishments of wealthy employers. To employ several such craftsmen was considered a noble act and a token of aristocracy. No doubt other *khāna-kār* artisans performed various tasks for employers with modest means, though no evidence is available. Du Mans remarks that in Isfahān there existed a group of artisans ("ouvriers") who lacked sufficient capital and other means to offer their products directly to consumers, and therefore sold them to established traders who had shops in the bazaar.<sup>172</sup>

Though the evidence is somewhat fragmentary, it can nevertheless be perceived that a graded hierarchy of petty craft producers and workers did exist in Safavid Iran, from 1) the guild masters in their own shops at the top, to 2) skilled artisans working for wealthy patrons, to 3) journeymen/*khalifas* who had skills but lacked the means to set up a shop and thus a) rented shops or space in the royal square, or b) worked for masters, or c) sold their products to artisans and traders with shops, to 4) itinerant ambulatory skilled and unskilled labor ("street artisans") who served the poorer urban classes and perhaps outlying villages, with 5) apprentices hoping to eventually rise as high on this

deputy when the latter is absent": *Artisans and Guild Life*, 91.

<sup>171</sup> Olearius, *The Ambassadors...*, 80.

<sup>172</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 90-92.

scale as their acquired skills and capital resources permitted.<sup>173</sup>

Estimates of the total number of guilds vary. Chardin in the 1670s, the poet Khaki Khurasani in the 1650s and the *Tadhkirat al-mulūk* in 1725 all say that there were 33 major guilds; Du Mans counted 40 guilds at Isfahan and Kaempfer about 50, "including entertainers and others who did not have shops in the main bazaar."<sup>174</sup> The most comprehensive lists are those provided by Mehdi Keyvani. He enumerates the 33 main guilds or professional groupings (including goldsmiths, money changers, glass makers, weavers, tailors, armorers, carpenters, confectioners, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, shoemakers, builders, potters, bakers and cooks) and another 74 distinct subdivisions within them (armorers, for example, including arrow-smiths, bow-makers, makers of rifle stocks, rifle makers and gunpowder makers), plus about 50 other less-skilled, lower-status guilds (including washermen, camel drivers, bath keepers, porters, gravediggers, millers, barbers, entertainers of various sorts, dancers and prostitutes), and another 8 groups supervised by the shah's private barber (including masseurs, bloodletters and knife grinders), for a rough total of some 165 occupations, including the various internal specializations.<sup>175</sup>

The size, status and wealth of the major guilds naturally varied considerably. The Russian traveller Kotov in 1624 counted 400 cloth printers, 400 coppersmiths, 200 haberdashers, 200 money changers, over 200 slipper makers, 200 swordsmiths and 90 saddle makers in the main bazaar at Isfahan.<sup>176</sup> Uruch Beg Bayat says Isfahan had 10,000 craftsmen's shops and 600 caravansarais with

<sup>173</sup> The evidence, assembled by Keyvani, *ibid.*, is as follows: for skilled artisans working for wealthy patrons, Chardin, *Voyages*, IV, 91-93; for artisans renting shops or booths in the royal square, *ibid.*, VII, 339-340 (though Keyvani thinks each shop paid three tumans a week rent, this seems a fantastically high sum; my notes on Chardin indicate that the whole square was rented for 50 écus (about three tumans) per day); for the existence of undercapitalized artisans selling their goods to traders with shops, Du Mans, *Estat de la Perse*, 194-195; and for street artisans serving lower income groups, Kaempfer, *Am Hofe...*, 159.

The situation of apprentices may be appreciated from Kuznetsova's data on the city of Erivan, ca. 1800, where in 7 of 11 guilds there were two to three times as many apprentices as masters, implying that over half of all apprentices would not end up as masters, but in one of the other categories above: "Urban industry in Persia," 316. Keyvani point out that

... in each *rāsta* [lane] of the bazaar the number of shops was limited, and there was consequently a restriction of the number of craftsmen and tradesmen in any guild who could found their own businesses.

*Artisans and Guild Life*, 124.

<sup>174</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 47-48, citing Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 499; *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 19a; Du Mans, *Estat de la Perse*, 194-206; and Kaempfer, *Am Hofe...*, 121-122, 159-160.

<sup>175</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 49-56. A type of poetry dealing with artisans, known as *shahr-ashub* (literally, "town-disturbing") poetry provides indirect evidence of the numbers of crafts and guilds. One poet who died in 1504 covers 98 occupations, while another who died in 1699 wrote on 120 occupations: *ibid.*, 198.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 56, citing F.A. Kotov, *A journey to the Kingdom of Persia (circa 1624)*, in *Russian travellers to India*

tradesmen and artisans in 1601; Chardin says Tabriz in Shah Safi's time (1629-1642) contained 15,000 shops, 300 caravansarais, 70 *khans* (commercial buildings) for merchants and 110 *khans* for craftsmen.<sup>177</sup> Kuznetsova reports that of a total population of some 11,463 people in Erivan ca. 181 there were 2,318 artisans and traders, who with their families would constitute a very high proportion (up to 80 or 90 percent) of the city.<sup>178</sup> As to the relative wealth and status of different guilds,

Information about the earnings of different occupations and guilds is scarce. The European travellers indicated that goldsmiths, gold wire drawers (*zarkashān*), goldbeaters (*ṭala-kūbān*), jewellers, and money-changers (*ṣarrāfān*) enjoyed the highest earnings and social status. Brocade weavers (*zar-bāfān*) earned better incomes than most other workers.... Amongst the ordinary guilds, a few stood in particularly high esteem, for example physicians and druggists to whom patients entrusted their life and health, and money-changers with whom people deposited their money. Certain crafts such as glass-making, gilding and calligraphy were esteemed for the skill and art which they required. Wealth and honesty were the main sources of the prestige of guilds such as goldsmiths and jewellers.<sup>179</sup>

These wealthiest guilds—money changers, jewellers, goldsmiths—were put at the entrance of the royal bazaar, in recognition of their prestige (and to tax them better). "Messy" or "untidy" guilds such as wholesale foodstuffs, fullers, dyers, and camel and mule drivers, were kept in certain, mostly peripheral, areas.<sup>180</sup>

The most important type of commodity produced in Safavid times was textiles, with a great variety of raw materials and techniques. Silk was the principal manufacture. Europeans estimated that ten to twenty thousand bales (each of 216 pounds) of raw silk were produced annually, primarily in Gilan, Mazandaran, Shirvan, Khurasan and Azerbaijan.<sup>181</sup> Silver and gold brocades, taffetas, turbans and other weaves and products were made in such centers as Tabriz, Kashan, Yazd and Isfahan by literally thousands of urban and rural producers.<sup>182</sup> Tavernier mentions carpets from Kirman and

and Persia, translated by P.M. Kemp (New Delhi, 1959), 18-19.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, citing le Strange, *Don Juan of Persia*, 93, and Chardin, *Voyages*, II, 321, 327.

<sup>178</sup> Kuznetsova, "Urban industry in Persia," 311; see also editor's note ii, 320.

<sup>179</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 43.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-126.

<sup>181</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 250, citing Olearius, book 5, chapter ix (1662 edition), 312-313, and book 5, chapter xviii (1669 edition), 241, and Chardin, *Voyages*, IV, 162-163.

<sup>182</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 250-251, based on Chardin, Tavernier and Du Mans. According to Chardin, for example, "All the wealth and subsistence of Kashan comes from its manufactures of all manner of silk stuffs and gold and silver brocades.... A single village (*bourg*) of this area has a thousand houses of silk workers": *Voyages*, III, 3-4, cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 251.

Sistan; since carpet exports (from Kashan, Isfahan and elsewhere) appear to have been largely controlled by the shah, they will be discussed below.<sup>183</sup> Cotton is described as an agricultural product by the European travellers; as cheap, good quality cloth was imported from India, Iranian cotton cloth was used only by the lower classes.<sup>184</sup> Other textile and woven products included felt hats and garments of wool and camel hair at Kirman and Yazd, and rush stuffs and matting from Sistan.<sup>185</sup> Merchants, urban and rural artisans, and the shah all seem to have had a share in the production and marketing of the many textile products which constituted the core of Iranian "manufactures" in the seventeenth century,<sup>186</sup> and despite the encroachment of merchants and the shah, the weavers were probably the most powerful guild in Safavid times, strong in Isfahan, Tabriz, Yazd and Kashan. The Yazd weavers protested the imposition of the "customary" dues (*rusum*) by the local military garrison to 'Abbas in 1603, who abolished the tax in their favor, while the protests of the silk-growers of Rasht and Lahijan caused Safi to cancel the royal silk monopoly just after 'Abbas's death in 1629.<sup>187</sup>

Pottery, including porcelain objects and faience tiles (called *kashi*, after Kashan) used to decorate the walls of mosques and other buildings, was another major manufacture. Blue-and-white ware on Chinese models was made at Kirman, Yazd, Shiraz, Mashhad and Zarand; other pottery centers included Kashan, Isfahan and Qom.<sup>188</sup> 'Abbas brought 300 Chinese potters to Isfahan, and Iranian craftsmen succeeded in making "true porcelain" of high standards from local inputs sooner

<sup>183</sup> Tavernier, *Les six voyages...* (Amsterdam, 1679), 155-156, cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 252, for Sistan and Kirman.

<sup>184</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 248-249, based on Olearius, book 5, chapter vii (1169 edition, p. 227; 1662 edition, p. 305) for the cultivation of cotton, and Du Mans, *Estat de la Perse*, 14, and Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse* (Paris, 1930), 246, 302, for the making of cotton cloth.

<sup>185</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 252, based on Chardin, *Voyages*, IV, 154-155, VIII, 465, and Tavernier, *Les six voyages...* (Amsterdam, 1679), 319-320; Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 49.

<sup>186</sup> Saleh emphasizes merchants' control of textile manufacturing, as compared with metalworks, ceramics and leather products which were generally controlled by the craft producers: "Social Formations in Iran," 104-105. Keyvani draws on Olearius (1669 edition), 303, and the *Tarikh-i Kashan* of 'Abdul Rahim Zarrabi, edited by Iraj Afshar (Tehran, 1341/1963), 492-494, to establish the existence of "the many craftsmen and tradesmen of the outlying villages who had no connection with the urban guilds but held a considerable share in the production of manufactured goods and articles": *Artisans and Guild Life*, 39. In the case of textiles, these rural producers undoubtedly included many women as well as men. The shah's role in the organization and marketing of manufactures will be discussed in section 2, below.

<sup>187</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 159.

<sup>188</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 253; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 147; Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 403; Olearius, *The Ambassadors...*, 70.

than European craftsmen did.<sup>189</sup> Savory considers Iranian ceramic tiles of the seventeenth century "unsurpassed."<sup>190</sup>

A third important manufacture was high-quality arms and armor. Sixteenth-century armor included a mail shirt covered by four iron plates, armbraces, helmet and circular steel shield. The steel was imported from India and damascened in Iran, with Qom in the seventeenth century and Khurasan in the eighteenth known for their swordsmiths.<sup>191</sup>

Other manufactures produced in Iran include leather, for which Tabriz was a center (its shoemakers exported their goods throughout the country),<sup>192</sup> and glass, for which Shiraz was the most well-suited site, since the necessary wood and raw materials were found in the region.<sup>193</sup> In addition,

Travellers and contemporary documents also refer to jewellery, dyes, glassware and articles in crystal, paper-making factories (though the paper produced was inferior in quality not only to European paper but also to that of Central Asia), and soap factories. Cheap soap was made from mutton fat scented with herbs. The upper classes imported a better quality soap from Aleppo.<sup>194</sup>

In terms of technique and skill, Du Mans had a high opinion of Iranian coppersmiths, braziers, gold beaters, wire drawers and shoemakers. He was much less impressed with wood turners, gunpowder makers, gunstock makers, chestmakers and rope makers (who worked only with cotton and couldn't make heavy ropes such as for bridges and (European) ships).<sup>195</sup> In addition to the Chinese potters, European gold- and silversmiths found work in Iran, as did watch makers and cannon

<sup>189</sup> Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam. Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, volume 3: *The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 40; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 147. See Margaret Medley, "Islam, Chinese Porcelain and Ardabil," pp. 31-45 in *Iran* (Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies), volume XIII (1975) for a general discussion of the material and artistic relationships between Chinese and Iranian porcelain in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

<sup>190</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 144.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 153. Savory quotes Chardin on Iranian swords: "Their Cimeters are very well Damask'd, and exceed all that the Europeans can do, because I suppose our Steel is not so full of Veins as the Indian Steel, which they use most commonly": *The Travels of Sir John Chardin in Persia*, volume II, 297-298. The sword blades of Qom are singled out by Olearius, *The Ambassadors...*, 70.

<sup>192</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 130; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 252, based on Tavernier and Thévenot.

<sup>193</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 253: "... there were several glass shops [in Shiraz], which were not, however, continuously engaged in manufacture."

<sup>194</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 152.

<sup>195</sup> Du Mans, *Estat de la Perse*, 194-211, discussed by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 255-56.

founders; their numbers were not, however, large (Tavernier counted eleven Europeans in the royal workshops).<sup>196</sup> Efforts to set up a printing press by an Armenian were met by religious opposition; Chardin too had contracted to bring printers from Europe but no funds could be obtained from the Safavids for this purpose.<sup>197</sup> A press to mill coins was built after French designs, apparently under 'Abbas, but it soon broke.<sup>198</sup> On textiles, Iranian and European, Emerson observes:

In the seventeenth century, the Persians employed almost every weaving technique known, often with great skill and subtlety, and for a long time had been ahead of Europe. But when Tavernier was writing he could say that the range of textile manufactures 'cède aujourd'hui à nos nouvelles manufactures, les Persans admirant à leur tour les riches étoffes qui se font dans nos provinces,...' Du Mans thought that the *zarbaft* [gold brocade] still surpassed that of the West, but Venetian fabrics of a similar kind were more expensive and more highly regarded in Persia, 'à cause qu'elles sont plus chargées d'or et d'argent'.<sup>199</sup>

It is to be concluded perhaps that in the seventeenth century Iranian artisans adequately met the vast majority of the country's varied needs, excelled in a number of products on an international level (from carpets and other textiles to pottery and metalwork), lagged behind Europe in some emerging advanced technologies (watches, armaments, printing) and were holding their own in a spirited competition with the rest of the world in the most prized mass manufactures—hand-made textiles of all types.

A number of both primary and secondary sources imply that the volume of commerce in Safavid Iran was relatively small, hindered by an undermonetarized economy (and the conversely large role of the agricultural sector), the difficulty of transportation, royal economic policy and other factors.<sup>200</sup> These difficulties should not be underestimated, and it is true that internal trade was less in Iran than in the Mughal empire (which was, after all, ten times larger) and external trade *perhaps*

<sup>196</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 183, cites Tavernier. See also Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 256.

<sup>197</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 257, citing Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse* (1930), 224, 240 on opposition to the Armenians' project, and Chardin, *Voyages*, IV, 89-90, 274-275, 283 on his own efforts.

<sup>198</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 257, citing Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse* (1930), 189.

<sup>199</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 257, citing Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse* (1930), 344-345, and Du Mans, *Etat de la Perse*, 195.

<sup>200</sup> See for example Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 97-98: "Compared to the land-based economy, other economic activities in Safavid Persia were small and of secondary importance.... The volume of commerce was small"; and Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 20: "Nevertheless, on the whole, the amount of Persian trade could not be called vast." Chardin states that "there is not enough commerce, nor enough movement in the country to easily reduce everything to cash": *Voyages*, V, 416.

smaller than in the Ottoman Empire (which was much closer to Europe); nevertheless, the significant place of merchants in the urban economy must be acknowledged and evaluated. The discussion here will be focused on the role played by Iranian merchants in the internal trade of Iran and by Armenians in the external trade; subsequent sections will complete the picture by analyzing the Safavids' and Europeans' roles in internal and external production and commerce.

Emerson judges that "Until very recently, the great bulk of Persian trade was internal, and took place at small local markets; long-distance movement between different areas of the country was not easy because of limitations of transport and terrain."<sup>201</sup> There was thus, presumably, an important group of merchants—small, medium and large—in each area; Keyvani identifies "The big businessmen of Šafavid Iran, who were the *tujjār* (merchants), *sawdāgarān* (entrepreneurs), and *bunakdārān* (wholesale dealers)."<sup>202</sup> Inter-regional trade did occur, with Qom for example exporting around the country fresh and dried fruits, soap, sword-blades and pottery; Kashan its textiles and melons; Georgia and Shiraz their wines; Hamadan its rice and wheat; and Luristan its livestock, especially to Isfahan. (for an idea of the routes between areas, see Appendix II, maps 2.7 and 2.8).<sup>203</sup> Merchants made use of a network of bazaars and caravansarais (inns/trading posts): bazaars could be quite large-scale emporiums,<sup>204</sup> while caravansarais were fortified resting places on the great trade routes at which travellers stayed as long as they liked, with no payment for lodging—"... it is clear that the system provided merchants with a large measure of security both for their persons and for their property."<sup>205</sup> Complex, and difficult-to-decipher relations existed among the shah, qizilbash and local merchants in the provinces, which by the seventeenth century were quite possibly tilting in favor of the provincial merchants in their areas, and the shah in Isfahan, both gaining at the expense of the qizilbash.<sup>206</sup> Merchants did not form permanent organizations similar to the guilds, but

<sup>201</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 277.

<sup>202</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 110.

<sup>203</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 277-278.

<sup>204</sup> The Royal bazaar at Isfahan covered some 11 1/2 square miles and was termed by Fryer in 1677 "the surprizingest piece of Greatness in Honour of Commerce the whole world can boast of, our *Burses* being but Snaps of Buildings to these famous *Buzzars*": cited by Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 166. Manwaring, in the late eighteenth century, called the Qazvin bazaar three times as large as the Exchange of London: cited in *ibid.*, 189.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>206</sup> See Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 61, for some interesting hints of these relations. In discussing the thirteenth to early fifteenth centuries, Petrushevsky also provides some intriguing suggestions:

instead divided into more loosely affiliated groups based on their city of origin, nationality and religion, or line of business, thus somewhat weakening their influence.<sup>207</sup> Unlike the guilds, too, they paid no *bunicha* tax, but they were subject to customs dues levied on imported goods. Iranian merchants generally dominated the internal trade of Iran, and had a far more limited role in the external trade; though in the sixteenth century they had travelled to Aleppo in the Ottoman Empire to meet Europeans, as well as to Russia and (much less frequently) even to Venice, by the time of 'Abbas, neighboring India was their *ne plus ultra*, according to Fryer.<sup>208</sup>

The key intermediaries in both import and export trade in Safavid Iran proved to be members of the Armenian merchant community. In the sixteenth century Armenians had already been active in the trade of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus,<sup>209</sup> but their real rise to prominence in the Iranian economy dates from 1604 when 'Abbas, on one of his Ottoman campaigns, ordered the removal of the Armenians of the valley of Ararat to Iran, from their prosperous trade center at Julfa to a suburb of Isfahan specially built for them and called New Julfa (or eventually, simply Julfa), administered by their own *kalantar* (mayor).<sup>210</sup> Though there were numerous skilled artisans in the community,<sup>211</sup> it

The characteristic peculiarity of this nobility [referring to town-dwelling landowners] was its close connexion with the great commercial companies and with big wholesale and transit trade. They invested a part of their income in the companies of the great wholesale merchants, called usually *ur-taq* (Turkish *ortağ*—"partner in a share", investor), "the Emperor's own merchants" (*tujjār-i khaṣṣ*), or "trustworthy merchants" (*tujjār-i amīn*), who returned the feudal lords a share of the profits in goods, mostly textiles....

... Such a rapprochement of some groups of feudalists with the large-scale merchants is a phenomenon typical of medieval Iran, as also of other lands of the Near and Middle East. Thus in contrast to Western Europe from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries the merchants did not oppose the great feudal landowners, but made common cause with them against the craftsmen, the lower classes of the towns and the local peasantry.

"Iran under the Il-khāns," 509-510, with reference to W. Barthold, "K istorii krestyanskikh dvizheniy v Persii," 61-62.

<sup>207</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 71.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 218-219, for the sixteenth century. Fryer, *A new account of East India and Persia...* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1915), Second Series, number XXXIX (being volume 3 of Fryer), 117, cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 159. Emerson describes several very unsuccessful experiences of Iranian merchants accompanying embassies to Spain in 1611, to Venice, to Henry IV of France and Louis XIV: *ibid.*, 259.

<sup>209</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 258 note 1; Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 217.

<sup>210</sup> Vartan Gregorian, "Minorities of Isfahan: The Armenian community of Isfahan, 1587-1722," pp. 652-680 in *Iranian Studies*, volume VII, numbers 3-4 (1974), 665; Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 859-860. Emerson observes that Armenians resided "throughout the Safavid dominions": in Tiflis, they were "richer and more numerous than the Georgians, and great mutual antipathy existed between the two races"; in Armenia itself they were a majority and repopulated the devastated cities after the Safavid-Ottoman wars; they could also be found in Tabriz, Ardabil and Shiraz, and in the Caspian area where most of the 24-30,000 who were relocated succumbed to the inhospitable climate: "Ex Occidente Lux," 260-261.

<sup>211</sup> Particularly in the highly-qualified crafts as goldsmiths, furriers, carpenters, and others: Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 179-180; Gregorian, "Minorities of Isfahan," 680.

was as skilled international merchants that they filled a much-needed role in the Safavid economy.<sup>212</sup> Working with Armenians established in the Ottoman Empire, India and Europe,<sup>213</sup> they served as privileged agents of the shah in exporting Iran's raw silk and as independent merchants in their own right. In 1618 Armenians outbid the English to become agents for the Safavid silk monopoly; when the royal monopoly was rescinded in 1629 they retained much of the silk trade in their hands, and according to Chardin, "all the trade in cloth," during the seventeenth century.<sup>214</sup> In an interesting passage, Fryer notes:

... they enter the Theatre of Commerce by means of some Benefactor, whose Money they adventure upon, and on Return, a Quarter Part of the Gain is their own: from such Beginnings do they raise sometimes great Fortunes for themselves and Masters.<sup>215</sup>

In any case, a sizeable number of the merchants of Julfa became very wealthy; according to Chardin, there were sixty worth 100,000 écus in cash and up to two million livres (about 40,000 tumans) in all their property, and a handful with even more.<sup>216</sup> It can be argued, in my view, that though a distinct national and religious minority, the Armenians were in no sense "external" to the Iranian economy, to which they contributed with the customs dues they paid as well as the poll-tax on non-Muslims and other "presents" surrendered to the state, and most fundamentally through their artisanal skills and by making possible the exchange of commodities to and from beyond Iran's borders.

<sup>212</sup> "In reply to some of his ministers who asked why he had been so generous, the Shāh ['Abbas] said that the Armenians were more competent than the Iranians in commercial business, and that it would be better to train the Iranians for fighting and not let them be spoiled by commerce": Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 228, citing Père Tadeusz Judasz Krusinski, *The history of the revolutions of Persia*, translated anonymously into English (London, 1728), II, 34-40.

<sup>213</sup> There were Armenians active in Italy, France, England, Holland and Russia: R.W. Ferrier, "The Armenians and the East India Company in Persia in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," pp. 38-62 in *Economic History Review*, Second Series, volume XXVI, number 1 (February 1973), 44. Fernand Braudel finds that Armenian merchants reached Danzig in 1572, and that some "even owned ships on the Indian Ocean": *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*, translated by Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), volume II, 1167, and volume I, 50-51.

<sup>214</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 20, citing Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 367. See also Gregorian, "Minorities of Isfahan," 669; Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 47-49.

<sup>215</sup> John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels*, volume II (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1912), 249. This rather mysterious reference to unnamed "Benefactors" is reminiscent of Petrushevsky's comment on the relations between landlords and merchants in the Il-Khan period: see note 206 above.

<sup>216</sup> Chardin and Tavernier cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 262. In 'Abbas's time there were rich merchants worth "2-3 millions"; in 1674 there were still families worth "a million": Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 106.

Despite the wealth accumulated by individual Iranian and Armenian merchants, there do seem to have been limits to their potential for capital investment as a class. Some of these have to do with the preponderance of the royal production and commercial sector and Safavid economic policy, discussed below. There would appear to have been a certain amount of conspicuous consumption—Chardin, Du Mans, Thévenot and Tavernier speak of excessive spending on “women, furniture, dress and suite,” of wastefulness with food, of incredible expenses on clothing, far beyond one’s budget<sup>217</sup>—but I would think this applies more to the court (and perhaps a few wealthy families with commercial connections) than to most of Iran’s merchants. Chardin notes that successful merchants tended to invest first in a house, then in the financing of a market, bath, caravansarai, mosque, and finally, perhaps, in bridges, roads and provincial caravansarais. The stores in the market, bath and coffee-houses could be rented out; the others were in the nature of charitable and pious actions.<sup>218</sup> Banani notes that whereas in Russia, Poland and the Baltic Armenians were “among the pioneers of capital investment,” in Iran “they either hoarded the capital or bought land.”<sup>219</sup> Finally, it should be noted that the main mechanism of capital accumulation pursued by merchants was the seeking of profits through price differentials in various areas; although steps were taken toward a putting out system in textiles (particularly in the royal sector—see below), there was no establishment of real capitalist production units based on wage labor.<sup>220</sup> All of these factors generally inhibited capital accumulation on the part of the seventeenth-century Iranian merchant class.

The remaining key urban groups in Safavid Iran included the ulama, the urban lower classes, women and religious minorities. Here the ulama will be discussed in their “social” capacity as a significant urban group, by looking at their occupations, social characteristics and connections with other classes, while in section IV below their ideological relationships with the state and the rest of society will be examined.

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<sup>217</sup> Emerson, “Ex Occidente Lux,” 273-275.

<sup>218</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 296.

<sup>219</sup> Banani, “Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia,” 93-94.

<sup>220</sup> Saleh, “Social Formations in Iran,” 112.

As Keddie observes, the term *ulama* is "a word inadequately rendered by 'clergy,' as their role is not to intercede between people and God, but to carry out Muslim law, education, charity, and so forth—a broader role than that of the Western clergy."<sup>221</sup> In keeping with this wide variety of functions, they were a "numerous class," as Minorsky notes.<sup>222</sup> In addition to the *sadr* at the top of the official Safavid religious bureaucracy, responsible for overseeing judicial functions and religious endowments (*vaqf* property), the principal occupations of the *ulama* included: 1) *shaykh al-islam*—the *sadr*-appointed chief religious dignitary of a city and judge in civil legal cases;<sup>223</sup> 2) *qazi*—religious judge, and like the *shaykh al-islam*, a scholar likely to have students (though generally losing ground in his legal capacity to the *shaykh al-islam* in the seventeenth century);<sup>224</sup> 3) *mudarris*—a professor in a *madrasa* (religious school), of which there were a great many;<sup>225</sup> 4) *mutavalli*—administrator of a religious endowment, and as we have seen often becoming a private landowner;<sup>226</sup> 5) *pish-namaz*—the prayer leader of a mosque;<sup>227</sup> and 6) *va'iz* (preacher), *qari* (Qur'an reciter) and *azan* (reciter of the call to prayer)—all among the undoubtedly numerous "less important religious functionaries connected with mosques."<sup>228</sup> Sayyids were the important and numerous group of individuals claiming descent from the Prophet and Imams; they received stipends from *vaqf* income and other religious taxes (the *khums* and *zakat*, according to Du Mans), and though the *sadr* and other high religious appointees had to be drawn from among their number, they could be found at all levels of society as their status depended less on religious learning than on "charisma of lineage."<sup>229</sup> A final group, the mystical Sufi orders, was systematically persecuted and degraded in status under

<sup>221</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 4.

<sup>222</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 15.

<sup>223</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 124-125; Chardin, *Voyages*, VI, 52.

<sup>224</sup> The *qazi*'s reduced role in the seventeenth century consisted of "marriage and divorce, division of inheritance, preparation and endorsement of deeds of sale, issuance of burial permits, certification of legal maturity (i.e., puberty [*bulūgh*]), and manumission": Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 194. Safavid policy was to play the various judicial instances off against one another, and thus they tried successfully to raise the status of the *shaykh al-islam* through royal favor and marriage alliances: Chardin, *Voyages*, VI, 55. Arjomand presents data showing a decline of *qazis* as a proportion of prominent clerical dignitaries from 32 percent under Isma'il, to 18 percent under Tahmasp and 9 percent under 'Abbas: *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 127, table 5.2.

<sup>225</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 124. Chardin counted 48 "colleges" at Isfahan (Arjomand says 57): *Voyages*, VIII, 273.

<sup>226</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 124.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 125. Chardin counted 112 mosques at Isfahan: *Voyages*, VIII, 273.

<sup>228</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 301 note 13.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-127; Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 230.

'Abbas, who reduced the functions of his Sufi bodyguard to gatekeepers, jailers, executioners and sweepers in the royal buildings.<sup>230</sup> Individuals described by the Europeans as "shaggy, ill-clad dervishes ... who preach austere on street corners and in coffee houses, tell stories, and are not highly regarded" were similarly part of the urban lower classes.<sup>231</sup>

There are several ways to conceptualize internal differentiations among the ulama in Safavid Iran. The standard distinction is a political one between "official" and "non-official" or "popular" ulama:

On the one hand there were government-appointed and -supported ulama who filled official religious posts, including the *imam jom'eh* or leader of the chief Friday prayer of each city, and various judicial figures. On the "non-official" side were those who fulfilled no governmental functions but taught, preached, and made judgments in ulama-run institutions and courts, receiving their income from vaqf revenues and the gifts of their followers.<sup>232</sup>

This distinction will be taken up when ulama-state relations on the ideological plane are considered, below. Recently, Said Amir Arjomand has revised the split in an interesting manner, at once cultural and political-economic:

A new finding of great importance emerges from the research presented here: in the Safavid period the term '*ulamā*', together with the more specific religious titles and designations, refers to two distinct social groups: an "estate" of clerical notables, who were Sunnis prior to the conquest of Iran by Ismā'il I but formally professed Shi'ism and entered the service of the Safavids as judges and clerical administrators, and a group of religious professionals consisting of the Shi'ite doctors.<sup>233</sup>

The "clerical notables" were from Iranian, mostly land-owning families, often sayyids, and culturally stamped by their "broad range and catholicity of intellectual interests and training," including philosophy, literature and natural science in addition to the religious sciences.<sup>234</sup> As Aubin argues, they were speedily incorporated into the new Safavid state, and maintained control over educational, judiciary and religious institutions right through the seventeenth century.<sup>235</sup> The "religious

<sup>230</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 110-118.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>232</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 17. Hussein Nasr puts the *sadr*, *shaykh al-islam* and *qazi* into the "official" group, and *mujtahids* (the most learned and respected scholars) and prayer-leaders (whom he feels were generally chosen consensually by the community) into the "popular" group: "Religion in Safavid Persia," pp. 271-286 in *Iranian Studies*, volume VII, numbers 1-2 (1974), 275-277.

<sup>233</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 122; also 107, and *passim*.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 127-129.

professionals'' were Shi'i scholars from Arab lands (Syria, Iraq, Bahrain), experts in religious jurisprudence, ritual and dogma, who came to Iran after 1501. Many of them were appointed *shaykh al-islam* of cities and (less frequently) *pish-namaz* of the royal household or of important mosques, while others held no office, living and teaching independently of the state particularly as scholars of the "transmitted" religious sciences and jurisprudence.<sup>236</sup> The complex pattern of cooperation and competition between the two groups ended with the ascendancy of the religious professionals, and the role of this struggle in the fall of the Safavid dynasty will be examined in Chapter Three.

Finally, one can note the varied material bases of different groups within the ulama: these include a) the role of some as landowners and high officials (part of the ruling class),<sup>237</sup> b) the state-independent, middle to upper class position of the many ulama connected by marriage, residence and economic function to the bazaar,<sup>238</sup> as well as c) the sayyid strata who were petty landowners or middle-class urban groups, and finally d) the markedly lower-class groups of darvishes and some more economically marginal sayyids, both rural and urban.

The existence of a destitute urban underclass below the poorer artisans is hinted at here and there in the sources. Olearius says that the lower classes in Isfahan—"the Scum of the Town"—frequent the taverns (while the upper classes patronize coffee and tea houses where poets and historians hold forth).<sup>239</sup> When Tahmasp closed taverns, gambling houses, opium dens and brothels in 1534, he gave up the 2,000 tumans that these establishments had been paying in taxes; the size of this sum suggests the extensiveness of these activities, which were only temporarily stopped in any case.<sup>240</sup> Chardin records the existence of 11,000 registered prostitutes in late seventeenth-century

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-123; the reference is to Aubin, "Études Safavides. I."

<sup>236</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 129-132.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Minorsky's comment that these ulama were "closely allied either with the bureaucrats (especially in the judicial activities), or with the landed gentry (either in administering the waqfs, or in the capacity of land-owners)": *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 15-16.

<sup>238</sup> Ulama/bazaar relations were based in part on such factors as: the devotion of artisans and traders to Islam; preference of some ulama to work in the bazaar as accountants and clerks (by virtue of their literacy and numeracy skills) rather than serve the government; merchant and artisan support of the ulama through payment of religious taxes and contributions; the location of mosques, madrasas and *takiyas* (Sufi lodges) in the bazaar; ulama monopoly of notarial services and provision of legal advice; and common complaints when the government overstepped the law vis-a-vis bazaaris and/or the ulama: Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 152.

<sup>239</sup> Olearius, *The Ambassadors...*, 80-81.

<sup>240</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 189. Monshi gives the date as 1532-33, noting only that the revenue was removed from the ledgers: *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 203.

Isfahan, and another 1,500 who were not registered;<sup>241</sup> prostitutes were classed as a guild "because they had their own peculiar rules and paid a professional tax," estimated at 200,000 écus (about 13,000 tumans) by Chardin in 1666, and at 4,000 tumans by an Iranian observer.<sup>242</sup> An acquaintance of Chardin's, when they passed a beggar, replied to Chardin's question of why he gave him no alms: "It's because there are no poor in our kingdom, truly reduced to begging; and this dog who shouts at us is a scoundrel who begs from laziness; look at him, he's bursting from eating."<sup>243</sup> Chardin judged that the poorest subjects of Iran, in the countryside or in the cities, were well enough off, well-nourished and clothed, and worked less hard than the poor of Europe.<sup>244</sup> Monshi, however, makes reference to "the poor and needy, both men and women" who lived "in most of the large cities."<sup>245</sup>

Of urban women generally, the sources do not seem to say a great deal. Writing on the nineteenth century, Keddie observes:

Some girls managed to get an education, either at school or at home, and a few reached the level of learning and accomplishment considered necessary to be a mujtahid, although these were not generally considered mujtahids, and most Shi'is held that being male was a necessary quality for a mujtahid. There was, and still is, however, a wide network of educated women mollahs who cater to women's religious gatherings and ceremonies, giving readings and commentaries on the Quran and telling stories from the lives of the imams.

.... There were also professional women who served the needs of other women, like midwives, ambulant saleswomen who visited women at home, healers, and others, including the women mollahs mentioned above.<sup>246</sup>

<sup>241</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 371. Emerson writes:

The most expensive were those that formed the Shāh's dancing troupe, who were known by the sums they charged: 'Miss' ten *tumāns*, 'Miss' five *tumāns*, etc. Lesser prostitutes, of whom there were 14,000 registered in Isfahan in 1666, paying a tribute of 200,000 écus, did not charge less than 15-20 pistoles.

Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 284, based on Chardin, *Voyages*, II, 208-217, and Fryer, *A new account...*, volume III, 128-130. It is not clear whether the money earned by prostitutes can be accepted as fact: 15-20 pistoles would equal 3-4 tumans (about ten English pounds), a fabulous sum of money for anyone in the working or even upper middle class to earn in a whole year. Emerson feels that there was probably an equal number of unregistered prostitutes, who were undoubtedly the most exploited and destitute group.

<sup>242</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 109.

<sup>243</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 392.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 465-466.

<sup>245</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 204. Elsewhere he alludes to the "riff-raff" of Qazvin, including "clowns and circus performers" (!): *ibid.*, 672.

<sup>246</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 32, 34.

Women of course engaged in productive activity in the household as well—cooking, cleaning, raising children, making clothing (weaving and spinning). Upper-class women on the other hand were idle, and urban women were to a great extent probably veiled and secluded generally.<sup>247</sup> According to Islamic law women received one-half the inheritance that men did, although Keddie notes that this, “plus the fact that a married woman continues to hold her own property, is more favorable to women than were most Western laws before this century.”<sup>248</sup>

We conclude this overview of the urban private sector with a look at the main religious minorities. The artisanal and merchant activities of the Christian Armenians have been discussed above.

Keyvani gives a comprehensive list of the economic activities of the Jews of Iran, including women:

Contemporary documents mention about twenty occupations in which Jews were engaged. Large numbers of them were silk weavers, dyers, goldsmiths, jewellers, druggists, wine makers and wine sellers, brokers, second hand dealers, ambulatory vendors, musicians, dancers and singers. A definite preponderance of Jews was observed in midwifery and in certain highly remunerated female occupations, e.g. brokeresses (*dallāla-hā*) who carried messages and negotiated between Muslim *ḥarīm* ladies, suppliers of recipes for love potions and magic concoctions, and story-tellers. In the light of estimates of the Jewish population of Iran in the Ṣafavid period, the significance of the Jewish economic activities becomes apparent. Pedro Teixeira, who was in Iran in and after the year 1587, estimated the total number of Iranian Jews at 8,000 to 10,000 families, and later Chardin reckoned that there were about 30,000 to 35,000 Jews throughout Iran.<sup>249</sup>

On the other hand, Emerson suggests that many were poor, while others prudently gave the impression of being so, while according to the early nineteenth-century historian John Malcolm, they were often poor.<sup>250</sup> Chardin says that the Zoroastrian community, totalling perhaps 80,000 people, lived throughout Iran, but especially at Kirman and Yazd. They were industrious and worked as agricultural laborers or textile workers, but rarely if ever as artisans or merchants. Few received an education and most were very poor.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>247</sup> Chardin writes that “it is known that women don't leave the house”: *Voyages*, V, 270. See also Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 14.

<sup>248</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 33. She concludes:

Enough has been said to suggest the variability and productivity of women's roles. As in other premodern and modern societies most women had fewer rights and less power than men of the same social group, who tended to dominate them, but their lives had more variation and possibilities for fulfillment than are acknowledged in the usual Western stereotypes about Muslim women.

*Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>249</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 177-178, citing Chardin, *Voyages*, II, 55-56.

<sup>250</sup> Emerson, “Ex Occidente Lux,” 270-271. Malcolm is cited by Gregorian, “Minorities of Isfahan,” 657.

<sup>251</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 355-362, 380. Pre-Islamic Zoroastrian culture had a high regard for cultivation in

### III.C.2. The "royal household"

Here discussion will center on the productive activities organized by the shah, only alluding to the commercial side—mainly the international trade—which will be covered in the next section. Chief among these were the thirty-odd royal workshops (*buyutai*) employing some 5,000 workers in activities ranging from the kitchen (drinks, fruits, butchery, pastry) and palace services (furniture and lighting, buildings, stables) to artisanal work (tailoring, metalwork, book-binding and illuminating, woodwork, the mint and arsenal). There were also apparently separate royal "manufactories" of one sort or another, involving thousands more workers in the production of textiles, carpets and porcelain, in all making the shah by far the biggest employer of labor in Iran (even leaving out the court, bureaucracy and army).<sup>252</sup> The total budget for the workshops appears to have been on the order of 4.5 million livres (over 100,000 tumans), i.e. one-seventh to one-eighth of total state expenditures.<sup>253</sup>

Artisans in the royal workshops had relatively good working conditions, wages and benefits. Chardin says that some earned as much as 800 écus (about 53 tumans) a year plus board, though others as little as 70-80 francs (1 1/2 tumans), without food. Board was measured by the quarter, half or whole "plate" (*jira*); a whole plate included enough to feed six persons and could be worth 800 or 900 francs (20 tumans) a year if food was expensive. Wages were paid once a year and raised regularly, or a bonus equivalent to a year's wages might be paid every three years, and a like amount for a masterpiece that pleased the shah. Like court officers, however, wages were normally paid in the form of drafts on the revenue of a village, requiring the services of a collector who received 5-10

general, and planting of trees and reclaiming land, in particular: Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, xviii-xix.

<sup>252</sup> The number of workshops is given as 32 by Chardin (*Voyages*, V, 499) and over 50 by Kaempfer, who includes many subdivisions (*Amoenitatum...*, 120-131, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 135 note 1). The Mughals in India had 36 *karkhana*, and the Janissary corps in the Ottoman empire had 34: *ibid.* Lists of the various tasks can be found in Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 65-69, and Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 168-169. The number of about 5,000 workers is derived from Chardin's statement that each workshop had on average 150 workers, some more (180 tailors), some less (72 painters, attached to the library): *Voyages*, VII, 329.

<sup>253</sup> Chardin says it was "up to five millions": *Voyages*, VII, 331. Minorsky tentatively suggests the unit is écus (one écu = three livres or francs), which would make, as he points out, 350,000 tumans: *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 30, and Keyvani accepts this: *Artisans and Guild Life*, 166. But the correct unit is more likely francs/livres, as this is usually intended when Chardin omits the unit, and moreover, elsewhere in estimating the general expenditures of the state, he puts the royal workshops at "four million," and here francs/livres are clearly intended: *Voyages*, V, 498.

percent in fees, and a process that might take up to two years. Chardin also maintains that workers were never fired, and treated free by the court physicians when ill. They were expected to follow the court when it travelled, unless excused, but could return home after six months. It appears that they were also free to work on their own outside the court for anyone who employed them, and in this way they could augment their salary up to fourfold. Finally, their sons could expect to be taken on at the age of 12-15, and would often receive their fathers' appointments when the latter died.<sup>254</sup>

Though some of the royal workshops such as the kitchen and household services—did not really produce commodities, others did. In the library, for example, paper was made for the calligraphers and artists who produced books, which were then bound, the whole process constituting the “art of the book.”<sup>255</sup> Tailors made the royal family's clothes and the robes of honor that were important presents offered by the court, and other clothing workers produced stockings, shoes, trousers and hats.<sup>256</sup> The arsenal engaged locksmiths, cutlers and makers of arrow heads, gunpowder and fireworks.<sup>257</sup> The mint employed some 400 workers at its height, with various small shops and “factories” attached to it, including the activities of a foundry, gold-beating, and the forging, drawing, cutting, blanching and striking of coins.<sup>258</sup> All of these commodities were used more or less exclusively by the court.

Other commodities were produced not just for consumption at the court, but for marketing in Iran and abroad, and these tended to be on a larger scale, organized by the shah but crafted outside the royal workshops. Already mentioned was the case of the 300 potters ‘Abbas brought to Isfahan; pottery and porcelain continued to be imported from China (‘Abbas outbid the Dutch for the right to trade in it), but also was increasingly made in Iran in several locations from 1616 on.<sup>259</sup> ‘Abbas involved the state even more in the production of silk textiles and carpets, as the Polish Jesuit, Father

<sup>254</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 329-334; V, 422.

<sup>255</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 129; Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 169.

<sup>256</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 66; Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 168.

<sup>257</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 136.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 58, 61.

<sup>259</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 147; Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 59-60, based on Hans E. Wulff, *The Traditional Crafts of Persia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1966), 149.

Krusinski, attests:

... the foresight of Shāh 'Abbās the Great caused numerous and manifold factories to be established in the provinces of Shirvān, Qara-bāgh, Gilān, Kāshān, Mashhad, Astarābād, as well as in the capital Isfahān itself, in which, under a strict supervision of overseers, silk textiles and sashes [turbans], as well for common use as royal ones (*cydaris*), ordinarily called *madyl*, are woven in a magnificent and wonderful way, while rugs and all kinds of woven fabrics are constantly made for the royal court.<sup>260</sup>

High-quality silks, velvets, damasks, satin and taffetas, as well as embroidery and printed cottons, were produced by workers for the shah, who used them at court and exported to Europe and on an even wider scale, to India.<sup>261</sup> Chardin says that the silk had formerly been worked in the royal workshops but was now sent into town to paid workers.<sup>262</sup> Isfahan seems to have had stalls for 25,000 silk workers, with the court looms stretching for a quarter mile.<sup>263</sup> Carpets, too, were produced under royal supervision, apparently in "factories" at Isfahan, Kashan and elsewhere,<sup>264</sup> and by workers in the countryside who were given royal lands in exchange for their labor.<sup>265</sup> Many of these carpets found their way to Europe, where "their presence in the houses of wealthy seventeenth-century burghers is faithfully recorded in the paintings of Rubens, Van Dyck, Breughel and others."<sup>266</sup> Unfortunately, it is not possible to form a clear picture of the way in which production was organized other than these brief indications, which establish that the initiative came from the court itself.<sup>267</sup> To complete our survey of economic structure, we turn now to Iran's external relations in the period from 1500 to 1630.

<sup>260</sup> Krusinski (in Latin), cited by Arthur Upham Pope, editor, *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, volume VI, *Carpets, Metalwork and Minor Arts* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1938-9 [reissued 1964-5]), 2431.

<sup>261</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 144; Krusinski cited in Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, volume VI, 2432.

<sup>262</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 330.

<sup>263</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 141.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-139. "... it was the Safavids who elevated a cottage-industry to an activity on a national scale and one which formed an important part of the economy. The first actual carpet-factory was probably constructed at Isfahān during the reign of 'Abbās the Great": *ibid.*, 136.

<sup>265</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VII, 330.

<sup>266</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 137.

<sup>267</sup> Hodgson observes that royal sector carpet-weaving was a sophisticated combination of art and technique: "... court painters sometimes provided the cartoons. Making a break with the craft traditions, the carpet weavers of the royal weaving establishments now undertook to produce veritable pictures in yarn; while the technical skill was in nowise reduced, the figures produced were of unprecedented complexity and detailed charm.

*The Venture of Islam*, volume 3, 40.

### III.D. International Trade and Relations with the West through 1630

Iran has had a long history of economic, political, cultural, military and diplomatic relations with the West going back at least to the Greek and Persian wars of the fifth century B.C., but the Dark and early Middle Ages in Europe, coupled with the rise of Islam (seventh to ninth centuries) and the Ottoman Empire (eleventh to fifteenth centuries) to a great extent cut off contact between Iran and the West, and Iran's principal relations shifted to its neighbors to the immediate west—the Ottomans—and east—the dynasties of India. The thirteenth century saw the beginning of commercial relations between Iran and the Italian city-states of Genoa and Venice, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Iranians increasingly crossed Anatolia to meet European traders in Ottoman Bursa and the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. In the fifteenth century the European silk industry underwent a great expansion, making Bursa the international market for raw silk, and Iran the main source of Middle Eastern silk cultivation.<sup>268</sup>

The rise of a Shi'i dynasty in Iran in 1501 changed the equation dramatically by inaugurating a long period of hostilities or outright warfare between the Ottomans and the Safavids, especially from 1512 to 1555 and the 1580s to 1616, that severely disrupted the trade patterns of the past. The high volume "peddling trade" of small merchants managed to continue in the sixteenth century, but the wars and high peace-time tariffs cut heavily into the overland silk routes and Bursa's prominence.<sup>269</sup> With the reign of 'Abbas and the beginning of the seventeenth century a new interest arose both in Iran and Europe for commercial and military alliances designed to circumvent and undermine the intervening Ottoman power. The key to 'Abbas's project both economically and politically was the establishment in 1619 of a Safavid monopoly on Iran's valuable raw silk exports, and attempts to

<sup>268</sup> Halil Inalcik, "The Ottoman Economic Mind and Aspects of the Ottoman Economy," pp. 207-218 in M.A. Cook, editor, *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: from the rise of Islam to the present day* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 210.

<sup>269</sup> On the peddling trade see Niels Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century. The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 28. This book has also been issued as *Carracks, Caravans and Companies: The structural crisis in the European-Asian trade in the early 17th century*, volume 17 in the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series (Copenhagen, 1973).

For the effects of Iranian-Ottoman hostilities on the value of the tax farm on silk in the Bursa market, see the statistics for 1487-1606 in Halil Inalcik and Niels Steensgaard, article on "Ḥarīr" (silk), pp. 209-221 in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, and London: Luzac & Co., 1979), volume 3, 213.

open up alternative water routes through Russia or the Persian Gulf in addition to the longstanding overland route through Ottoman territory (see Map 2.8 in Appendix II for international trade routes).<sup>270</sup> 'Abbas took one-third of all silk produced in Iran as the royal share and paid the producers for the rest at fixed rates.<sup>271</sup> Anyone seeking to export silk from Iran through any source but the state was required to pay high customs.<sup>272</sup> The most often quoted estimate of Iran's total silk harvest is Olearius's 20,000 bales (roughly 2,000 tons); Inalcik feels that 1,000 tons would probably be a more realistic figure for the annual production of raw silk in the 1620s, of which perhaps two-thirds was exported to Europe.<sup>273</sup>

From Iran's point of view, raw silk was the key commodity exported, followed by finished silk and carpets, wool, some precious stones such as turquoise, dried fruits and tobacco.<sup>274</sup> From a world-wide point of view, it was merely one commodity that fit into a much larger pattern of trade that was just emerging in the seventeenth century, and whose two main products were spices from the Far East and gold and silver bullion from the Americas.<sup>275</sup> To some extent these currents met in Iran, as Olearius points out:

There is not any nation in all Asia, nor indeed almost of Europe, who sends not its Merchants to Isfahan, whereof some sell by Whole-sale, and others by Retail.... [These include over 12,000 Indians and] Tartars, Turks, Jews, Armenians, Georgians, English, Dutch, French, Italians and Spaniards.<sup>276</sup>

We turn now to a more detailed look at the emergence and development of Iran's international trade with both Europe and Asia, from 1500 up to about 1630.

<sup>270</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 196; Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 33ff.

<sup>271</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 398; Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 46.

<sup>272</sup> Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 381; M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, "The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," pp. 1-50 in *Persica* (Jaarboek van het Genootschap Nederland-Iran Stichting voor Culturele Betrekkingen), number VI (1972-1974), 40.

<sup>273</sup> Inalcik and Steensgaard, "Ḥarīr," 210. The lower figures are based on the English East India Company's 1620 estimate that 1,350,000 pounds were exported annually to Europe: see Issawi, *EHI*, 12.

<sup>274</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 20, based on Chardin, *Voyages*, IV, 162-166.

<sup>275</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 551, 568-569; Inalcik, "The Ottoman Economic Mind," 211-212.

<sup>276</sup> Olearius, *The Voyages and Travels...* (London, 1662), 299, cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 11.

### III.D.1. The Italian city-states, Spain and Portugal

Though the nature of Italy's and Spain/Portugal's relations with Iran differed radically (the former commercial and centered in the eastern Mediterranean, the latter military and centered on the Persian Gulf), what the southern Europeans had in common was the earliness of their contact with Iran, its indirect nature, and the fact that by 'Abbas's reign all three powers were in process of being eclipsed by the next wave of Europeans.

The Italian city-states of Genoa, Florence and Venice pioneered European contact with Iran in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. Through the early 1400s contacts were intermittent and somewhat perilous to Italian merchants, but in the fifteenth century security improved under the Aq-Quyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan, and Venice in 1473 even proposed a military alliance against the Ottomans (which came to naught).<sup>277</sup> These commercial contacts were above all indirect, taking place primarily in the Levant ports and at Bursa, where the Italians purchased raw silk and sold European woolens.<sup>278</sup> In the course of the sixteenth century this trade reached a peak: in 1600 approximately 200,000 kilograms of raw silk were exported from the Ottoman Levant ports to Europe, and 140,000 of these were carried by Italian merchants.<sup>279</sup> This high of about 1,500 bales in 1600 dropped to 1,100 in 1603-1604, then to about 500 in 1604-1605, and only a little over 350 bales a year through 1613. In the period from 1624 to 1626 this fell to 87 bales annually, increasing again to about 330 in 1636.<sup>280</sup> The reasons for the Italians' large seventeenth-century decline appear to have been several: strong French (and later Dutch and English) competition in the eastern Mediterranean, war with the Ottomans after 1645, and economic recession in the Venetian silk industry.<sup>281</sup> To sum up, then, despite the presence of individual envoys and adventurers such as Vincenzo d'Alessandri in the

<sup>277</sup> Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Safavids*, 12; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 105, 194; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 12-13. Venice sent weapons east which were stranded at Cyprus, and ultimately entered into a peace treaty with the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid II.

<sup>278</sup> Inalcik, "The Ottoman Economic Mind," 210.

<sup>279</sup> Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 162. Steensgaard estimates that 85 percent of this silk was Iranian, 15 percent Syrian.

<sup>280</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 124, from lists in Domenico Sella, *Commerci e industrie a Venezia nel secolo XVII*, *Civiltà Veneziana Studi*, 11 (Venice and Rome, 1961), 111-112, 115.

<sup>281</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 121-122; Ralph Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East, 1580-1780," pp. 193-206 in Cook, *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: from the rise of Islam to the present day* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 202.

early 1570s, and Pietro della Valle from 1616 to 1623, the Italians never established a commercial presence within Iran, and their great indirect role as exporters of Iranian raw silk from Ottoman ports dwindled to relatively minor proportions by the 1620s.

The Portuguese (and the Spanish—here treated together since the two kingdoms were joined from 1580 to 1640) pioneered the all-sea route to Asia in the 1490s, pursuing an essentially militaristic, proto-colonial project in the greater Indian Ocean area which aimed at control of a vast trade zone embracing the east coast of Africa, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, India, the Moluccas and China:

The Portuguese, however, came not merely as traders, but as conquerors. Their aim was to establish a Portuguese *imperium* extending over the whole of Asia.... The grand design of the Portuguese was to force all trade between Europe and the Indies to go round the Cape of Good Hope, by blocking its traditional outlets: the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Malacca. All cargoes would have to be carried in Portuguese bottoms. By seizing and fortifying ports on the coasts of Arabia, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese were in a position to harass the shipping of European rivals and to levy lucrative customs and port dues on foreign ships.<sup>282</sup>

In the Persian Gulf the Portuguese thus took a military line, occupying in 1507 the (even then) strategic island of Hormuz at the entrance to the Gulf, and forcing its 12 year-old king to become their vassal. This brought them into conflict with the Safavids, whose envoy arrived soon after, also to demand tribute. In 1515, after Isma'il's defeat at Chaldiran, a treaty was signed giving Portugal sovereignty over the island—the shah had no navy—in exchange for gifts and promises to help the Safavids recover the Bahrain islands and to put down a Baluchi tribal revolt. The Portuguese took in hand the Hormuz customs dues in 1522, and also built forts on the mainland, putting themselves in a strong position with respect to both the maritime and caravan trade to the the Indies and the Iranian interior.<sup>283</sup> Despite their relative proximity, contacts with the Safavid court were few, and not particularly successful: embassies are recorded in 1550-51 and 1574, with the latter being detained until 1578 for “improper behavior in mosques.”<sup>284</sup>

<sup>282</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 194. Portugal's pretensions in Asia were signalled by “King Manuel I's assumption of the grandiloquent title, “Lord of the conquest, navigation, and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India”, which had received papal endorsement in 1499-1500”: C. R. Boxer, *Jan Compagnie in War and Peace 1602-1799. A Short History of the Dutch East-India Company* (Hong Kong: Heinemann Asia, 1979), 1-2.

<sup>283</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 106-107, 195. See also Issawi, *EHI*, 9-10, and Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 3, 21.

Relations quickened and reached a decisive point in the reign of 'Abbas. Bahrain and its lucrative pearling activities was captured from the Portuguese in 1602.<sup>285</sup> Thereafter, until 1619, a series of ambassadors exchanged 'Abbas's and Philippe III's proposals on trade, military action and religious rights and privileges, with relations deteriorating badly after 1618 when 'Abbas dismissed a Spanish ambassador and swore to drive the Portuguese off Hormuz.<sup>286</sup> The denouement followed rapidly: the islands of Qishm and Hormuz were taken by Safavid troops with English naval assistance in February and May 1622. In 1625 the Portuguese signed a treaty with 'Abbas, giving up all their positions in the Gulf in exchange for one-half the customs at the lesser port of Kung, which in the event proved difficult to collect as the century wore on.<sup>287</sup> 'Abbas, meanwhile, systematically destroyed the installations at Hormuz and moved its commercial operations to the mainland at Gombur, which then took the name Bandar 'Abbas.

Portugal's grand designs thus came to failure by the 1620s. Its hold on the world spice trade was never absolute, even in the sixteenth century.<sup>288</sup> In the Persian Gulf it had dominated the carrying trade for a time but was forced to beat a quick retreat after 1622. With no commodity to trade freely with Iran, it had little economic impact on the Safavid state, except indirectly the unleashing of gold and silver bullion into the new world-economy, whose consequences deepened after 1630 and will be studied in Chapter Three. What could not be accomplished by Italy's distant Mediterranean commercial links nor by the more direct Persian Gulf military means of the Portuguese was next

<sup>284</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 193-194.

<sup>285</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 169-170; Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, entry for 1601-1602.

<sup>286</sup> Farmayan, *The Beginnings of Modernization in Iran*, 23, based on Sir Arnold Wilson, *The Persian Gulf* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 140. The diplomacy of 1602-1619 is covered in Khanbaba Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe occidentale à l'époque Safavide (Portugal, Espagne, Angleterre, Hollande et France)*, published doctoral thesis, University of Paris (Paris: Les Presses modernes, 1937), 64-75.

<sup>287</sup> For the taking of Hormuz, see Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 82-87. For the 1625 treaty and Portuguese difficulties in collection of its share of the customs, see Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 168-169. The Portuguese established themselves at Muscat in Oman in 1635 but were definitively driven from the Gulf area by an Arab victory there in 1650: Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, 154-155.

<sup>288</sup> Braudel argues the case for the limited effect of the Portuguese on the overland Levant spice trade: *The Mediterranean*, 543-569. See also Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 39 note 1. In general,

The Portuguese presence, which had spread quickly over a large area, throughout the Indian Ocean and beyond, as much the result of an indispensable interregional traffic as of a spirit of adventure or gain, had culminated in the creation of an immense and fragile empire. Portugal was not rich enough to maintain this vast complex, with its costly apparatus of fortresses, squadrons, and officials. The empire had to be self-supporting.

Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 546.

taken up by another set of rising European economies which sought direct and strictly commercial relations with Iran.

### III.D.2. England, Holland and France

The English, the Dutch and, later in the seventeenth century, the French, all came to Iran primarily as traders, not belligerents. English ships had disappeared from the Mediterranean in the mid-sixteenth century,<sup>289</sup> but between 1561 and 1581 a series of expeditions through Russia to Iran were undertaken by English merchants of "The Russia Company."<sup>290</sup> Anthony Jenkinson reached Tahmasp's capital at Qazvin in November 1561 by travelling from the North Sea around Scandinavia to Archangel on the White Sea, then to Moscow, and from there along the Volga, crossing the Caspian Sea, and then on foot through Iran. He delivered a letter from Queen Elizabeth to Tahmasp,

... to treat of friendship, and free passage of our Merchants and people, to repaire and traffique within his dominions, for to bring in our commodities, and to carry away theirs to the honour of both princes, the mutual commoditie of both Realmes, and Wealth of the Subjects.<sup>291</sup>

The interview went well until Jenkinson was asked whether he was a Muslim or an unbeliever, and answered that he was neither, that he was a Christian. According to Jenkinson, Tahmasp responded: "O thou Unbeliever, said he, we have no need of friendship with the Unbelievers, and so willed me to depart..."<sup>292</sup> In 1563, however, Tahmasp granted a second English expedition the extraordinary privilege to trade free of customs:

<sup>289</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 194. According to Hurewitz, "English ships began to make their way to Ottoman ports in the first half of the sixteenth century, but no factories (permanent merchant colonies) were established": J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East. A Documentary Record: 1535-1914*, volume one (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1956), 5. Hereafter this work will be cited as Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I. The same Anthony Jenkinson who reached Iran in 1561 secured from the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman I permission to trade in 1553, but "organized English commerce with the Ottoman Empire did not begin until three decades later": *ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> The Russia Company had previously been called "The Muscovy Company," and had begun its existence in 1553 under Sebastian Cabot with the romantic title of "the Myserie and Companie of the Merchant Adventurers for the Discoverie of Regions, Dominions, Islands and Places Unknown," seeking a north-east passage to China, but instead discovering Archangel in that year and becoming the Muscovy Company: Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 111.

<sup>291</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 111-112.

<sup>292</sup> Anthony Jenkinson, "Mr. Anthony Jenkinson's Second Voyage from London to Mosco, and thence over the Caspian-Sea into Persia, Anno 1561," pp. 521-524 in John Harris, *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Biblioteka...* (London: Thomas Bennet, 1705), volume I, 522. Tahmasp's advisors told the shah "that he had no need, neither was it requisite for him to have friendship with Unbelievers, whose Countries lay far from him...": *ibid.*

That you shall pay no manner of Customs or Toll, now, nor in time to come; And that such *English Merchants* as you shall appoint now and hereafter, shall pass and repass into all his Dominions and Countries adjoining, to buy and sell all sorts of commodities with all manner of Persons.<sup>293</sup>

Subsequent voyages in 1565 and 1568 led to renewals and amplifications of these rights,<sup>294</sup> but after one more embassy in 1579, the company discontinued its efforts in 1581, due apparently to some combination of the sizeable risks encountered along the long route to and through Russia, internal problems and the growing availability of alternative routes to the Middle East.<sup>295</sup>

The first of these routes to be exploited was the indirect one through the Ottoman Empire to Iran (or more precisely, to Ottoman territory to meet Middle Eastern merchants). This was the domain of the English Levant Company, whose 1581 charter granted it a monopoly of all trade between England and the Ottoman empire. The key import was silk, demand for which grew with the start-up of the English silk industry in the 1590s; by the 1620s, Levant silk worth some 75,000 English pounds annually was England's largest raw material import, accounting for some 40 percent of England's imports from the Levant.<sup>296</sup> Nevertheless, England's 600 bales represented only 10 percent of total European silk imports from the Levant ca. 1600, far behind France and a declining Italy.<sup>297</sup> The Levant Company's staple export to the Middle East was cloth, of which some 24-30,000 were going to Ottoman Aleppo, Izmir and Istanbul in the 1630s, considerably more than the Venetians or Dutch at that time.<sup>298</sup> It is difficult to untangle how much of this cloth made its way to Iran; scattered evidence suggests that early in the seventeenth century, up to four-fifths of the total

<sup>293</sup> "The Privileges granted by the Shaugh to the [Russia] Company—on the voyage of Thomas Alcock, George Wren and Richard Chenie," p. 525 in Harris, *Navigantium...*, 525.

<sup>294</sup> See document 3 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 6-7, for Tahmasp's decrees of 1566 and 1568. Item 13 of 1568 stipulates "that no *Kissel Bash* doe let or hinder them...": *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>295</sup> "... apart from the appalling risks involved in the sea-route round the north of Scandinavia to the White Sea, attacks by Tatar bandits in the Volga region, and other troubles, resulted in too great a loss of lives and goods": Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 112. Braudel seems to think there was a pretty significant trade on this route from 1561 to 1575, and that its demise had other causes:

For a few years all the marvels of the East travelled up the Volga, to be loaded on to London vessels in St. Nicholas Bay. For a few years only, it is true. The project eventually collapsed for political reasons and because after 1575, the English again had access to the direct Mediterranean route.

*The Mediterranean*, 194. In a nice turn of phrase, Minorsky refers to the route across Russia as "geographically quaint, but, by its strangeness, characteristic of Elizabethan daring and enterprise": "The Middle East in Western Politics, in the 13th, 15th and 17th centuries," pp. 427-461 in *The Royal Central Asian Journal*, volume XXVII (October 1940), 454.

<sup>296</sup> Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East," 195, 196, 202. The figure of 40 percent is derived from Davis's table on p. 202 by discounting imports of Greek currants.

<sup>297</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, "The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," 8.

<sup>298</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 125, based on Alfred C. Wood, *The Levant Company* (Oxford, 1936), 42.

may have.<sup>299</sup> The overall role of the English Levant Company in establishing a significant trade with Iran is thus not to be underestimated; its only drawback, as in the case of the Italians, was its indirect aspect and base in Ottoman territory.

A group of 27 Englishmen reached the court of 'Abbas at Qazvin in 1598. One of them, Sir Anthony Sherley, helped in the reorganization of the Safavid army, and in 1600 was sent to Europe as an ambassador of 'Abbas to seek allies against the Ottomans. He was empowered by a *farman* to offer considerable advantages in exchange for military support, including freedom from tolls and customs in perpetuity, freedom of religion, legal jurisdiction over their own nationals (i.e. extraterritoriality), and freedom to trade anywhere in Iran. As Hurewitz points out, these promises were offered on 'Abbas's terms, from a position of strength, yet they do contain remarkable commercial, political and legal concessions for European traders. No European power took him up on this, however.<sup>300</sup>

It was only after 1615, with the appearance of ships of the English East India Company (EIC) in the Persian Gulf, that Iranian-European relations would be established on a direct and sustained basis. In that year Richard Steele and John Crowther took a consignment of unsold woollens from the company's base in Surat (India) to Isfahan, where 'Abbas issued a *farman* which somewhat vaguely enjoined his subjects

... unto what degree soever ... to kindly receive and entertaine the English Frankes or Nation, at what time any of their ships or shipping shall arrive at Jasques [Jāsk], or any other of the Ports in our Kingdome: to conduct them and their Merchandize to what place or places they themselves desire: and that you shall see them safely defended about our Coasts, from any other Frank or Franks whatsoever.<sup>301</sup>

Another *farman* was obtained from 'Abbas by Edward Connock in 1617 and confirmed by Shah Safi in 1629 which laid the legal foundations for Iranian-English commercial relations. Among its clauses: English goods may travel throughout Iran, "paying only the accustomed duties my own subjects pay, and as they do in Constantinople and Alepo and other parts of Turkie" (articles 2, 15);

<sup>299</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 120-121, based on Wood, *The Levant Company*, 120.

<sup>300</sup> Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 15-16. Nor did a 1609-1612 mission to Prague, Rome, Madrid and London by Anthony's brother, Robert Sherley, produce any significant results: Minorsky, "The Middle East in Western Politics," 457.

<sup>301</sup> Cited by Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 113. The text appears in *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, volume 1, book iv, 524. "Frank" was a general term in Iran for Europeans.

the English shall judge their own countrymen's crimes (article 10); and stolen goods should be replaced by the responsible Iranian governor (article 15).<sup>302</sup> This promising trade opening was not immediately followed up, although "factories" (as trading posts were called) were opened at Isfahan in 1617 and Jask (a port 90 miles east of Hormuz) in 1619.<sup>303</sup>

After 1618, as 'Abbas's displeasure with the Portuguese came to a head, the EIC was called upon to provide the naval forces for the taking of Hormuz. After the victory there, some misunderstanding arose over the terms of the Iranian-English agreement, which gave the English the right to trade without paying customs (and indeed a claim to one-half the customs receipts of Hormuz and later Bandar 'Abbas), but not to occupy Hormuz militarily, and also to maintain ships in the Gulf should they be needed against the Portuguese.<sup>304</sup> In 1627 Sir Dodmore Cotton arrived in Iran as England's first ambassador; 'Abbas offered to exchange 10,000 bales of silk annually for English cloth as long as England would have no trade with the Ottomans. Otherwise the embassy was ignored, and Cotton died in 1628, without having accomplished much improvement in the two countries' relations.<sup>305</sup>

What was the nature of the trade between the EIC and Iran through the 1620s? The EIC entered the ambit of the Iranian economy for two reasons: the first was to purchase silk directly at its source, the second to export as many European (and Asian) commodities as possible to avoid paying in cash.<sup>306</sup> On both counts its success through 1630 was limited, although its accomplishment in

<sup>302</sup> Text is in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 18-19.

<sup>303</sup> Connock was given 71 bales of silk at slightly above market price in exchange for the English goods he brought, but his caravan was arrested before reaching Jask (it is not clear why) and he died several days later, possibly poisoned: Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 334.

<sup>304</sup> See the terms of the agreement given in Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 342, and also Farmayan's discussion, which sheds some light on the disputed claims as owing to differences in the Persian text and the oral translation made to the English: *Beginnings of Modernization in Iran*, 24, based on Wilson, *The Persian Gulf*, 149, and Nasrullah Falsafi, *Zindigani-ye Shah 'Abbas Avval* (Life of Shah 'Abbas the First), four volumes (Tehran, 1953-1962), volume 4, 225.

<sup>305</sup> Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 123-124.

<sup>306</sup> The correspondence of the company reveals both motives: "We have now made full enquiry concerning the state of Persia, where we are certainly informed of the vent of much cloth in regard their country is cold ... so that hereafter, if we find ourselves to be overlaid with cloth, then we have no remedy but to go thither" (letter from Surat to the EIC, 19 August 1614); and "I dare therefore believe it [the Iranian trade] may yield a far better satisfaction than many, if not all, your now India trades together" for the silk trade was "the only richest yet known in the world" (letter from Isfahan to the EIC, 2 April 1617). Both letters are cited by Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 41 note 1.

opening up the trade should not be underestimated. English imports of raw silk got off to an inauspicious start when 'Abbas declared the royal monopoly in 1619; the EIC bid 43.2 tomans per load for the export monopoly, and thought the Armenian bid of 50 was an Iranian trick. The English then embarked on a buyer's strike to drive prices down but within a year (after receiving no silk) they agreed to 'Abbas's terms.<sup>307</sup> From 1619 to 1629 the EIC bought a total of 3,542 bales (each of 100 kgs.) of raw silk, an average of 322 per year, with great fluctuations (from 60 in 1627 to 928 in 1628).<sup>308</sup> In 1621 they spent 93,000 pounds, in 1622 97,000, from 1624 to 1629 40,000 per year, and at the end of the decade and early 1630s, the three so-called "Persian Voyages" went out to Iran with about 125,000 pounds each.<sup>309</sup> Of even more interest are profit rates on this trade. The first 71-bale shipment of 1619 was bought in Iran for 7.33 shillings per pound, and sold in India for 26.83 shillings per pound, a remarkable profit of 266 percent.<sup>310</sup> Bal Krishna's data on the three Persian Voyages indicates far lesser overall profits of 60, 80 and 40 percent respectively.<sup>311</sup> Iran's exports also included some finished silks, cottons, carpets, rhubarb, saffron and rose-water.<sup>312</sup>

The English paid for these imports with a combination of goods and silver. The principal English exports to Iran were woolen cloth (difficult to sell in India), lead and tin, with smaller amounts of steel, Spanish iron, India's sandalwood, ebony, sugar and cotton goods, African ivory from France, quicksilver from Amsterdam, clocks and utensils.<sup>313</sup> These exports were apparently in some quantity, as English cloth and tin glutted the Iranian market, leading to a slump in prices after 1628, with a combination of incipient harm to Iranian weavers and perhaps benefit to consumers. Nor was the quality of English cloth always high, as Savory reports the striking image of "Safavid soldiers who had received consignments of it in lieu of pay ran after English merchants in the street

<sup>307</sup> Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 334-335.

<sup>308</sup> Derived from *ibid.*, 395, table 19.

<sup>309</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 155 (the 40,000 pounds *per year* from 1624-1629 is not explicit, but should probably be inferred); Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations between India and England (1601-1657)* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1924), 73 note 1.

<sup>310</sup> My calculations, based on Ferrier's data, "The Armenians and the EIC," 45.

<sup>311</sup> Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, 73 note 1.

<sup>312</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 12, citing J.A. Mandelslo, *The Voyages and Travels of ...* (London, 1662), 11-12.

<sup>313</sup> Compiled from lists in Issawi, *ibid.*, 11, citing Mandelslo; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 385; and K.N. Chaudhuri, "The East India Company and the Export of Treasure in the Early Seventeenth Century," pp. 23-38 in *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, volume XVI (1963), 26.

and accused them for its poor quality.''<sup>314</sup> By far the bulk of the EIC's exports to the East were in the form of silver, however (and some gold): from 1601 to 1629 1,013,336 pounds sterling in cash was exported to all of Asia, against only 359,236 pounds' worth of goods.<sup>315</sup> In the era of the absolutist states of mercantilist Europe, this was a considerable disadvantage; the English government only grudgingly recognized the EIC's special needs for exporting silver. But in an important revision of accepted economic wisdom, both K.N. Chaudhuri and Ralph Davis have drawn attention to the benefits of English silver exports, based on differential prices for silver in Europe (which got it cheap from the Americas), and in Asia, where silver had a much greater purchasing power. This made the importing of silk for silver doubly profitable for the English; "Since silver was at a premium in Asia, and there was a strong European demand for Asian goods, the Company could buy cheap and sell dear."<sup>316</sup> This tendency then undermined the position of Asian merchants who found themselves outbid in their own markets, and strengthened the hand of those, like 'Abbas, who controlled the commodities sought by the Europeans. The rising share of its shipping in the Asian inter-port trade also came to play an important role in the EIC's total profits, as it carried Iranian, Armenian and Indian merchants between Safavid and Mughal territory.<sup>317</sup> There is thus, in this period from 1600 to 1630, the emergence in embryo of a world-system of markets: Spanish-controlled silver came from the Americas to Europe, where the English purchased it for trade in the East, and used the spices and other products (including Iranian silk) obtained in the East to finance its silver purchases in France, Spain and the Netherlands.<sup>318</sup> Moreover, the silver went first to India, where it purchased cotton goods, with which the spices of the "East Indies" and to some extent Iranian silk were financed. Given silver's purchasing power in Asia, and silk's value in the West, the EIC was in a position to profit at several points in the chain of transactions.

<sup>314</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 199.

<sup>315</sup> Chaudhuri, "The EIC and the Export of Treasure," 25. The total volume of bullion exported from the West to Asia was estimated at 1,500,000 pounds sterling in 1621 by Sir John Wolstenholme, member of an English government commission appointed to investigate the drain of silver: *ibid.*, 28.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. See also Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East," 193.

<sup>317</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 385; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 154-155.

<sup>318</sup> Chaudhuri, "The EIC and the Export of Treasure," *passim*.

Nevertheless this emerging new system was both fragile and still somewhat inchoate in 1629, the year of 'Abbas's death, at which point the EIC's position in Iran was not, on the whole, that strong. As we have seen, 'Abbas was highly successful in getting the price he wanted. The EIC moreover was chronically short of cash, which its cloth of varying quality could not make up for. Nor was the traditional overland route decisively displaced, retaining its viability especially after the 1618 peace between Ottomans and Safavids. The EIC suffered from discontinuities of communication, poor timing in its shipments and irregular investments throughout the 1620s. As a purely private association of merchants it was not tied that closely to the policies of the English state; although somewhat capitalized after 1609 by wealthy shareholders, James I had refused to become a member in 1624.<sup>319</sup> Finally, just when the English star appeared to be rising most rapidly in the mid-1620s after the victory at Hormuz, a well-organized competitor appeared on the horizon.

The Dutch United East India Company (hereafter VOC, from its Dutch initials) was chartered in 1602, formed out of the 1597 "Society for Trade in Distant Countries" and all the groups interested in trade with the East, brought together by the States-General of the Netherlands and endowed with an ample starting capital of six million florins.<sup>320</sup> From the beginning it was closely integrated with Dutch policy through the ties existing between the company's Court of Directors—the "Heeren XVII"—and the Regents of the United Provinces, who empowered it to make treaties with Eastern powers, declare war and peace, raise troops and build forts. This cross between the Portuguese military model and the English merchant capital one was a powerful combination which made the VOC politically and militarily aggressive in pursuing its economic objectives.<sup>321</sup>

<sup>319</sup> On the last point, see Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 114, and Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 364. On poor timing and investment problems, Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 368; Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, 53; Meilink-Roelofs, "The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," 6-7, 20-21. On the continued import of the land routes, Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 201-202, and Inalcik, "The Ottoman Economic Mind," 214.

<sup>320</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 118; Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 36.

<sup>321</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 363; Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 126ff. In 1614, Jan Pieterszoon Coen formulated the following "mirror" for the VOC's directors:

... you gentlemen should well know from experience that in Asia trade must be driven and maintained under the protection and favour of your own weapons, and that the weapons must be wielded from the profits gained by trade; so that trade cannot be maintained without war, nor war without trade.

Letter of Coen from Bantam, 27 December 1614, cited by Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 15.

The early 1600s saw the Dutch preoccupied in the project of capturing the southeast Asian spice trade from their base at Batavia (Jakarta). Scattered early initiatives by private traders in 1614 were followed up by the VOC in 1623 when it negotiated a "Grant of Capitulations by Shah 'Abbas to the Netherlands," which in addition to clauses on freedom of religion, compensation for stolen goods and the right to try its own nationals' crimes, stated that "all specie and merchandise which they import or export shall be free of all duties and charges, with the sole exception of the small duty of the *Nazir* [overseer or inspector] in accordance with ancient usage" (article 3), and that "*Rahdars* [guardians of the roads] shall not collect from the Netherlands any tolls in any locality whatsoever" (article 22).<sup>322</sup> In 1625-26 there was a rare Iranian embassy under Musa Beg to Europe, which had inconclusive results.<sup>323</sup> In 1631 the Dutch government very diplomatically granted extraterritorial privileges to Iranian merchants in the Netherlands, but despite the interesting formal fact of this "reciprocity"—which only put the Iranians on an equal footing with other foreigners in Holland, ignoring the fact that Europeans had on the whole greater rights in Iran—there was no actual *economic* parity, because Iranians almost never went to Europe to trade.<sup>324</sup>

The overall project of the Dutch Asiatic trade is classically captured in a letter of 1619 from Jan Coen to the directors:

Piece goods from Gujarat we can barter for pepper and gold on the coast of Sumatra, rials and cottons from the coast for pepper in Bantam, sandalwood, pepper and rials we can barter for Chinese goods and Chinese gold; we can extract silver from Japan with Chinese goods, piece goods from the Coromandel coast in exchange for spices, other goods and rials, rials from Arabia for spices and various other trifles—one thing leads to the other. And all of it can be done without any money from the Netherlands and with ships alone. We have the most important spices already. What is missing then?

<sup>322</sup> This is the text of the agreement as presented by Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 16-18. Meilink-Roelofs notes however:

The draft agreement offered by Visnich was largely confirmed by the Shah. There is, however, some obscurity about the freedom from customs dues, which were certainly mentioned in the draft; but it was not confirmed, only stipulated, that no higher imposts were to be levied than was usual (Article 3). In view of the tolls in the territory of the Khan of Shiraz, it was established that the Shah should only confirm that which the Khan decided (Article 22).... These restrictions aside, the trade agreements were extremely favourable to the Dutch.

"The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," 18. The ambiguity in the treaty would lead to Dutch conflicts with both the English over the customs at Bandar 'Abbas, and the provincial government of Fars, over its road tolls and other issues.

<sup>323</sup> Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 141-143.

<sup>324</sup> Text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 20.

Nothing else but ships and a little water to prime the pump. Is there any other country in the world with more ships than the Netherlands? Is there a shortage of water with which to prime the pump? (By this I mean sufficient money so that the rich Asian trade may be established). Hence, gentlemen and good administrators, there is nothing to prevent the Company from acquiring the richest trade in the world.<sup>325</sup>

To a great extent this project was successfully carried out.<sup>326</sup> Iran's place in this vast mechanism was as a producer of raw silk and a consumer of spices. From 1625 to 1629 the VOC exported 2,726 bales of silk from the Gulf, or 545 per year (compared to the EIC's average of 322 bales per year from 1619 to 1629).<sup>327</sup> The silk trade brought in some 1.5-2 million florins a year for the Dutch in the 1620s and 30s, compared with 2-3.5 million florins from the Asian pepper trade.<sup>328</sup> Silk was bought in Iran in 1626 at 5 florins per pound, and sold in Holland at 10, for a 100 percent profit without taking expenses into account; Coen estimated that Iranian silk brought "only" a net profit of 60 percent in 1629 (40-50 percent is often given as the minimum profit necessary in the long and arduous Asian trade).<sup>329</sup> Dutch spices were in fact the key to their trade plans in Iran, where demand was high, and prices higher than in India or even the Netherlands.<sup>330</sup> The Dutch contract with 'Abbas (the sole buyer) in 1626 called for the VOC to import goods into Iran worth 40,000 tumans (1,600,000 florins)—40 percent in pepper, 27 percent in other goods from the East, only 8 percent in European goods and 25 percent in ready cash (which proved difficult for the VOC).<sup>331</sup> Dutch profits on the "rare spices"—cloves, nutmeg and mace—reached as high as 800-1400 percent in Iran.<sup>332</sup> The market was unstable, however, and the arrival of a few ships could cause prices to

<sup>325</sup> Coen to the Heeren XVII, 8 May 1619, cited by Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 407.

<sup>326</sup> See the list of commodities and sources of the Dutch trade in Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 11-12.

<sup>327</sup> Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 395 table 19.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 396. These are gross sales; net annual profit on Iranian silk was about 200,000 florins: Meilink-Roelofs, "The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," 44.

<sup>329</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, "The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," 35, 43. Higher quality Chinese silk made profits of 320 percent, but was a primary commodity in the VOC's trade with Japan, leaving Iranian silk for the European market, in the 1620s. It should be pointed out that there were no comprehensive accounts kept by the VOC in these early years, and the data is thus rather fragmentary: *ibid.*, 34.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

<sup>331</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 198. Meilink-Roelofs says the 1626 agreement called for one-third in gold and silver, for three years, and that there were problems with silk delivery on the Iranian end: "The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," 22.

<sup>332</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, *ibid.*, 36. Cf. this fragment of accounts for 1623/24 comparing the prices of spices at Batavia with the selling price in Iran:

Item	Bought in Batavia (in florins)	Sold in Iran (in florins)	Percent Increase (profit)
cloves	8,242	77,884	945%
nutmeg	1,802	25,311	1410%

fall. The Dutch had to compete with Indian merchants from Malabar in the pepper trade (the only item of mass consumption) and Dutch pepper sometimes glutted the market in the 1620s.<sup>333</sup> Like the English, the Dutch also made profits from the carrying trade between Iran and India, although by playing the two European companies off against each other, both Iranian and Indian merchants could obtain good shipping rates. This state of affairs caused the Dutch ambassador to Iran, Jan Schmidt, to complain in 1629:

... they do not at all realize what profit and advancement their country and its inhabitants achieve with our extensive trade, on the contrary they brazenly assert that it is *us* who are quite dependent upon their trade and cannot manage without it.<sup>334</sup>

Though Middle Eastern and Indian shipping was not forced totally out of the carrying trade in the 1620s, the Europeans, by virtue of their greater immunity to piracy, were attracting an increasingly large share of it.<sup>335</sup>

By 1629 the VOC is acknowledged to have caught and surpassed the English in the new trade of the Persian Gulf, a somewhat surprising outcome given English naval prowess against Spain and Portugal in 1588, and again at Hormuz in 1622. As Braudel asks,

Why was the victory of Elizabeth's ships over Philip II's clumsy armadas not followed by the English supremacy that would have seemed logical? England won and Holland immediately sent her citizens, trade, and ships to the far corners of the earth, to the East Indies and China and continued to do so until the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>336</sup>

Braudel's answer is superior Dutch access to Spanish silver, the motor of the Asian trade. To this must be added the capture of the bulk of the world spice market, which unlocked the supply of Iranian raw silk. Moreover, "the Dutch showed more adaptability than the English and displayed a greater willingness to meet the conditions set by Shāh 'Abbas I.'"<sup>337</sup> They cooperated with the local Armenian merchants much better than the English, who demonstrated more than a little racism in

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mace	2,763	9,909	358%
pepper	24,848	78,528	316%

*Ibid.*, 44 note 344, calculations mine.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, 37, 35; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 198.

<sup>334</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 200, citing Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 402.

<sup>335</sup> See Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 154, who cites Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, 77-84, 292-294.

<sup>336</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 635.

<sup>337</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 198.

their attitude toward the Armenians.<sup>338</sup> Emerson calls the VOC's "a greater and more consistent trade"; Steensgaard considers it "was carried on with far greater regularity and energy than the English."<sup>339</sup>

For all this the Dutch were not one-sided victors in the new trade. In the first place the English were far from eclipsed decisively at this point. In the second, the Dutch had their problems with the Iranian authorities, entering into fierce disputes with the shah's agent Mowlai Beg over illegal private trading at Bandar 'Abbas with "Asian merchants" and failure to pay one-third of its silk bill in cash.<sup>340</sup> Other difficulties included the inelasticity of the spice market, compounded by Dutch overproduction of pepper and competition from Indian merchants, as well as the logistical challenge of transporting raw silk to the Gulf and then to the Netherlands via Surat in India, a trip of one to one and a half years.<sup>341</sup> The Dutch-Safavid trade was (more or less) a trade between equals; as the Dutch themselves acknowledged in 1650 it was not based on conquest (as in the Banda Islands and Taiwan), or on monopoly-contracts (as in the Moluccas), but in a class

"... with several other Oriental kings and princes, whether by formal agreements, or by free admission as merchants on the same footing as those of all other nations who are allowed to trade in their lands, at the pleasure of the ruler concerned." Or, as they noted elsewhere: "in neutral places with free peoples, where we find the laws and cannot impose our own."<sup>342</sup>

The trade was nevertheless very profitable and important to the Dutch, already in the 1620s.

The French role in Iran through 1630 can be dealt with in much briefer compass. Like the Italians, the French concentrated on the eastern Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire, although the timing of their rise corresponded more or less to that of the English and the Dutch. The 1535

<sup>338</sup> The EIC's agent, William Gibson, wrote to the Company regarding dealing with the Armenians in 1633 as follows:

... knew your worships the basseness of that nation in all manner of degrees you would never wish us thereto ... soe unfaithfull in work and deede, soe ungratefull for curtesies when their own turnes are serveth, soe griping and deceitful in their dealings and so slowe in performing of their promises are they even from the meaneest to the very best of them all.

Letter from Isfahan to London, 26 June 1633, cited by Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 47; also cited in part by Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 199.

<sup>339</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 156; Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 374.

<sup>340</sup> Meilink-Roelofs, "The Earliest Relations between Persia and the Netherlands," 22-23, 34-36.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, 41-42, 44.

<sup>342</sup> From the Heeren XVII's points and articles in the form of a general instruction for the governor-general and his council at Batavia, as cited by Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 21.

"Treaty of Amity and Commerce" between France and the Ottoman Empire (renewed in 1569, 1581, 1597, 1604 and 1673) established a precedent for European trade with the Ottomans based on "the ordinary customs and ancient dues and taxes" (article 2).<sup>343</sup> In 1600 France took only 10 percent of the 200,000 kilograms of raw silk exported from the Levant to Europe (Italy had 70 percent); in the 1620s, France's share amounted to about 50 percent, and by 1630 the Italians seems to have lost their share in the Levant trade entirely to the French.<sup>344</sup> Emerson, however, presents data showing total French trade in the Levant dropping from around 30 million livres circa 1600 to only 14 million in 1635, with the English apparently picking up the slack.<sup>345</sup> This is, in any case, the Italian pattern of indirect contact with Iran by trading for raw silk in the Ottoman empire.

In the sixteenth century French relations with the Safavids were limited to an occasional exchange of letters, such as that written by Shah 'Abbas to Henry IV in 1599.<sup>346</sup> In 1628 the Capuchins established a mission in Isfahan (and later Tabriz), to be followed in 1653 by the Jesuits at Julfa, the Christian suburb of Isfahan, and Shiraz, Shamakhi and Erivan (thus joining the Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Augustinians already in Iran). The heads of these religious orders frequently doubled as ambassadors for France to the Safavid court.<sup>347</sup> Through 1629, there was no direct French commercial contact with Iran—an East India Company was not set up in France until 1664. Its activities, and those of the other European nations and companies, will be examined in Chapter Three when we consider the period from 1630 to 1800.

<sup>343</sup> Text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 1-3. Bayani judges that the 1604 version "put France at the head of the Levant, obliging the Venetians, Spanish, Dutch and English to recognize her superiority and to borrow her vessels to conduct their trade": *Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 39.

<sup>344</sup> For 1600 and 1630, Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 162; for the 1620s, Murat Çizakça, "Incorporation of the Middle East into the European World-Economy," pp. 353-377 in *Review* (Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economies, Historical Systems, and Civilizations), volume VIII, number 3 (Winter 1985), 356 note 3.

<sup>345</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 122, based on P. Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1896), xxxi, 130-134. "In 1633, according to Seguiran, twenty ships left Marseilles for the Levant with goods to the value of 40,000 écus each": Emerson, *ibid.*, 126, based on Masson, *ibid.*, 372.

<sup>346</sup> Lockhart, *Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty*, 426.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 120; Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 173. The Capuchins were exclusively French; the Jesuits and Carmelites had many French members (though the latter had more Spaniards and Italians); the Augustinians were exclusively Portuguese: Lockhart, *The Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty*, 427-29. A grant by Shah Sultan Husayn to the French in 1708 refers to the five Christian orders (the above plus the Dominicans) in "the regions of Shirvan, Khalkhal, Ala Shur, Karabagh, Azarbayjan or Media, Isfahan, Tabriz, Tiflis, Ganja, Erivan, Nakhichevan, Shiraz, Bandar 'Abbas and in other regions and towns of our realm": Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 37.

### III.D.3. India, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, the Uzbeks

We turn now to a group of countries contiguous to Safavid Iran, three of them Islamic empires and the last a Christian Russia expanding into Asia by the seventeenth century. Of these, the friendliest pattern of relations was between Iran and Mughal India: there were fairly extensive diplomatic contacts between Shah Tahmasp and the Mughal emperors Babur and Humayun in the sixteenth century, continued by 'Abbas and the emperors Akbar and Jahangir. The only military/political bone of contention between the two empires in this period was the fortress of Qandahar which was claimed by both sides and frequently changed hands.<sup>348</sup> These close and basically warm relations permitted a fairly extensive trade between the two countries, signified by the presence of thousands of Indian merchants in seventeenth-century Iran.

A long-standing trade traditionally followed overland routes via Tabas to Qandahar, or north of the *kavir* (salt desert) to Mashhad, Herat and Farah; it was increasingly conducted by sea in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a journey of about a month, possible only from October to April due to summer monsoon storms on the Indian Ocean.<sup>349</sup> Krishna estimates the shipping on the India-Hormuz route at 10,000 tons either way; in any case travellers refer to the "great number of ships" that plied this trade.<sup>350</sup> Iranian imports from India included silk and cotton cloths, sugar, rice, coffee, spices, perfumes, precious stones, dyestuffs and steel. The most important of these were the cotton goods of textile centers such as Ahmadabad, whose profits apparently reached 100 percent, and which were partly for consumption in Iran, and partly re-exported overland by Greek, Turkish and Armenian merchants.<sup>351</sup> Bayani feels that sugar and rice imports brought profits of 35-50 percent; Tavernier says that Golconda steel cost 9-10 sous per ingot in India, and sold for 4-5 abbas in Iran (some eight or nine times as much).<sup>352</sup> Iranian exports to India included a variety of

<sup>348</sup> The history of these diplomatic and military contacts is studied in detail by Riazul Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations. A Study of the Political and Diplomatic Relations between the Mughal Empire and Iran* (Lahore: Ripon Printing Press, 1970).

<sup>349</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 151, 161-165. Cf. Krishna: "[Persia and India] had an extensive trade by land and water from time immemorial": *Commercial Relations*, 10.

<sup>350</sup> Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, 10.

<sup>351</sup> Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 48 (though no source is given on the profit rates); Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 151. Emerson also has a discussion on the incipient cotton textile production of Iran, but it seems that Indian cottons were by far predominant: *ibid.*, 248-249, based on Olearius, Tavernier, Du Mans.

<sup>352</sup> Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 48 (again unsourced); Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse*, book 5,

agricultural products (fresh fruit, dried fruit, nuts, rose-water and dyestuffs), fine silk textiles and carpets, manufactures such as porcelain and leather goods, and horses (on which large profits were made though few were sent).<sup>353</sup> Though this trade was to a certain degree complementary, the balance was definitely not in Iran's favor, as the EIC noted in 1632: "silver and gold is transported from hence [Bandar 'Abbas] into India in great quantities by merchants of these parts."<sup>354</sup> A similar imbalance was reflected in the number of each country's merchants residing in the other. As noted before, Armenians owned ships used in this trade:

Many Armenian merchants were established in the cities of Golconda, together with Persians; Fryer asserts that India was the only foreign country to which Persian merchants ventured, it being their 'ne plus ultra'.<sup>355</sup>

Indian merchants were active in Iran to a far greater degree, being established at the key points of Bandar 'Abbas, Shiraz and Isfahan, as well as at Kashan, Ardabil and even Astrakhan (on the Russian Caspian).<sup>356</sup> One-third of the population at Bandar 'Abbas was said to be Indian; some 12-20,000 Indians lived in Isfahan.<sup>357</sup> They acted as traders and commodity brokers, as well as usurers and currency dealers; with usurers borrowing at 8-10 percent a year, and lending at 30 percent.<sup>358</sup> Thus did the Indians play the larger role in the two countries' trade, not surprising in light of the Mughals' ten-fold population advantage.

The Ottoman Empire was even closer to Iran, both prosperous in itself and the land gateway to Europe, but the natural tendency for a large trade with and through the Ottoman territories was to a significant degree offset by the shifting conditions of war and peace between the two Islamic empires. The promising silk trade from Iran to Bursa in the fifteenth century had provisioned both the European and Ottoman textile industries, but after 1512 Selim I imposed a commercial blockade on Iran and confiscated the stocks of Arab, Persian and Turkish merchants caught with Iranian goods.

chapter xii (Paris, 1930), 243, cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 285.

<sup>353</sup> Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 48; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 152, based on Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 303-304; IV, 165; VIII, 439; and Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse* (1930), 245-246.

<sup>354</sup> Gombrun to EIC, 23 March 1632/33 [?], cited by Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 56 note 1.

<sup>355</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 159, citing Fryer, *A new account...*, volume III, 117.

<sup>356</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 264.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*; Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 229-230.

These restrictions were eventually removed, but hostilities broke out again in the 1540s, 1570s and 1580s, and from about 1600 to 1618, not ceasing effectively until after 1639.<sup>359</sup> Besides disrupting the trade, these wars were an expensive drain on both economies.<sup>360</sup>

Nevertheless, in Emerson's view the Ottoman-Safavid trade in the seventeenth century "probably remained the most important external trade of the country."<sup>361</sup> From Iran came much raw and some finished silk (as well as a few coarse cottons), tobacco, nuts and fruit, horses, camels and large numbers of sheep. There appear to have been few imports from the Ottoman Empire; Emerson mentions only soap from Aleppo and fish from Lake Van.<sup>362</sup> The natural conclusion is that considerable amounts of silver thus found their way into Iran, a mixed blessing which exposed the Safavids to the effects of the great Turkish inflation as the century wore on. These products moved in large quantities on the overland routes from Tabriz across Anatolia to Aleppo (which could be done in 32 days) or Bursa.<sup>363</sup> Along the way a somewhat unpredictable series of tolls and customs were levied by local Ottoman *pashas* at cities and river crossings: Masson estimates total payments of 168 piastres from Iran to the coast at Izmir, Steensgaard only 67 for a load of silk in 1618.<sup>364</sup> Protection costs had to be added in, and substantial risks remained of being robbed by Kurds and Turcomans in Anatolia or Arabs in the Syrian desert or along the Tigris-Euphrates.<sup>365</sup> Despite these costs and dangers, it is clear that the overland routes retained their viability in the sixteenth century and up to and beyond 1630, our stopping point here.<sup>366</sup> But the uncertainties induced by wars did undermine the trade,

<sup>359</sup> Inalcik, "The Ottoman Economic Mind," 213; Steensgaard and Inalcik, "Ḥarīr," 213-214.

<sup>360</sup> An Ottoman force assembled at Kaffa on the Black Sea in 1582-84 has some 86 *tons* of gold with it; "Meanwhile an English traveller in 1583 describes the Persians preparing loads of silver ingots and coins for the army's pay": Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 1172.

<sup>361</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 119.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-120.

<sup>363</sup> Tavernier in any case claims to have made Aleppo to Tabriz in 32 days; de Rhodes took over 70 to get from Izmir on the Mediterranean to Erivan in Safavid-held Armenia: *ibid.*, 132-135. Navigation on the Black Sea was hazardous in the seventeenth century with storms taking a great toll, although from Istanbul one could reach Trebizond not far from Iranian territory in only 4-5 days: *ibid.*, 136. The Ottomans closed the Black Sea to the West after 1610, which ended its role as a "turn-table" of international trade from the late Middle Ages on: Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 112-113, referring to G.I. Bratianu, "La mer Noire, plaque tournante du trafic international à la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Revue du Sud-Est Européen* (1944).

<sup>364</sup> Masson, *Histoire du commerce français*, 419, cited by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 142; Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 33.

<sup>365</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 144-148; Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 40.

<sup>366</sup> On this point see Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 549ff.; Inalcik, "The Ottoman Economic Mind," 214; and Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 39 note 1, citing R. Mantran, "Règlements Fiscaux Ottomans de la Province de Bassora (2<sup>e</sup> Moitié du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle)," in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, volume X (1967), 226.

while the overall context is much less that of an extensive Ottoman-Iranian exchange of products, than a transit trade to the Mediterranean ports and European markets.<sup>367</sup> Ottoman profits derived from its customs and tolls, plus access to Iran's agricultural and pastoral products. Iranian profits were garnered mostly by Armenian merchants in the Ottoman termini at Aleppo, Bursa and elsewhere, whose customers were Europeans.<sup>368</sup>

Direct Russian contact with Iran became possible along the Volga to the Caspian Sea after Ivan the Terrible's conquests of Kazan in 1552 and Astrakhan in 1556.<sup>369</sup> Behind the Russian state came a Russian peasantry advancing at the expense of the thinly-spread Muslim peasantry of the Irtysh basin; Muslim merchants along the Volga prospered however.<sup>370</sup> In 1569 Ivan wanted to supply Tahmasp with guns and cannon for joint actions against the Ottomans; though favorably received, the project was not pursued.<sup>371</sup> Monshi notes an embassy from Russia to 'Abbas's court in 1594/95, and mentions a return Iranian embassy for the next year; there is also a reference by 'Abbas in a letter entrusted to Anthony Sherley just after 1600 to "the land of the great king of Muscovy with whom we are in friendship as brothers."<sup>372</sup> These embassies led to exchanges of presents which Emerson feels were "probably a considerable proportion of the trade as a whole":

At first this exchange was largely of conventional presents: in 1602 'Azi? Khusrau returned with six gerfalcons from Moscow, and in 1608 Pīr Qulī Beg brought a bear; a Russian ambassador in the same year brought cloth. In 1614 the Russians brought thirty red, coloured, and grey gerfalcons. But in 1624 Levont'ev brought three forties of sables, and two years later the Persians responded with velvets, gold and silver fabrics and carpets worth over 8,323 roubles.<sup>373</sup>

<sup>367</sup> Steensgaard and Inalcik, "Harīr," 213-214; Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 61-62 note 8, citing R. Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square: English Traders in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1963, 1967), 146. Cf. on the political plane, Minorsky's interesting point that the Safavid dynasty can be characterized "by its enmity toward its immediate Western neighbours [i.e., the Ottomans] and by a sympathy towards the European nations": "The Middle East and Western Politics," 449.

<sup>368</sup> Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 61-62 note 8, citing Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square*, 146.

<sup>369</sup> Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 3-4. A temporary setback was the burning of Moscow by the Khan of the Crimea in 1571.

<sup>370</sup> Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 3, 49; W.E.D. Allen, *Problems of Turkish Power in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1963), 15ff.

<sup>371</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 112.

<sup>372</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 679, 681; 'Abbas's letter is cited in French by Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 60.

<sup>373</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 177.

There was some private trade as well. Braudel notes the presence in Moscow of "Greek, Tartar, Wallachian, Armenian, Persian, and Turkish merchants" (in the later sixteenth century, it would seem).<sup>374</sup> In the 1620s, Armenians, Iranians and Indians established trading posts at Astrakhan, across the Caspian.<sup>375</sup> The route from Moscow to Astrakhan by boat took 20-40 days, while the return needed 6-7 weeks. From Astrakhan to Iran meant either a hazardous week on the Caspian (the dangers were storms and Cossacks), or 3-4 weeks by land to Darband along a route with limited internal security and the possibility of being robbed, killed or enslaved.<sup>376</sup> The principal Russian export was a state monopoly in furs, while from the Iranian side came fine silk and some cotton textiles, raw silk, leather and precious stones.<sup>377</sup> Braudel feels "the great route was constantly stirring with river craft, pack animals and, in winter, sledges," while Savory judges "The international trade which followed this route was on a large scale and of a very varied character,"<sup>378</sup> but Russia's ability to pursue it in 'Abbas's time was limited by the dislocations caused to its economy by the "Time of Troubles" (1603-1613) and preoccupations in Europe through the 1640s, while the data on the exchange of royal presents does not seem like the tip of an extensive commerce, especially given the logistical and security problems encountered.<sup>379</sup> It would probably be most accurate to conclude that in our period a modest and somewhat irregular trade with Russia was established through both royal and private channels.

The Uzbek khanate on the borders of Iranian Khurasan across the Oxus River into Central Asia had limited relations with Iran through the 1630s. Often at war, there was not a considerable trade between the Safavids and the economically (if not militarily) rather less developed Uzbeks. The Uzbeks sold rhubarb and lapis lazuli in Iran; the latter product was obtained by Armenian merchants "in considerable quantities" despite the difficulties—"Persia was the general market for it, and they were able to sell it for very high prices to Europeans, among whom it was known as the 'Armenian

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<sup>374</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 193.

<sup>375</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 180.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-190.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, 182-183.

<sup>378</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 195; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 196.

<sup>379</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 176, 190. Cossacks even attacked Enzeli and Rasht on the Iranian Caspian in 1636 and 1668; in 1668 they killed or enslaved some 1,900 inhabitants at Farahabad: *ibid.*, 174-175.

stone'.<sup>380</sup> Though Fryer stated in the 1670s that nobody was allowed to enter the Uzbek territories and only embassies were allowed to leave, Olearius found Uzbeks trading freely at Isfahan in the 1630s.<sup>381</sup> The final word on this trade is that it was not of a large or continuous type.

#### IV. Ideological and Political Conceptions

In this section we shift to a brief look at the leading political and ideological conceptions underpinning the seventeenth-century Iranian social formation. Due both to its intrinsic importance and to lack of data on other aspects, the focus will be on the two main sources of authority—royal and religious—and their interrelations. The section closes with some observations on what is known about popular value systems, urban and tribal in particular.

##### IV.A. The Ideological Basis of the State

The Safavid state has been discussed in section II above as a set of institutions and personnel—the court, bureaucracy, provincial government and army. Here we are interested in illuminating the sources of its legitimacy and thus the content of the dominant ideology of authority in seventeenth-century Iran. The main progression to note is from the mixed patrimonial and theocratic basis of early Safavid legitimacy to a more secular absolutist conception by 'Abbas's reign, though with an ambiguous religious residue whose form will be considered in the next section.

Key ideas about the duties of kingship in general, according to Arjomand, include notions of the king as bringer of order, dispenser of justice, wager of war and furtherer of prosperity.<sup>382</sup> Both Islam and the earlier ethic (and political economy) of kingly patrimonialism influenced ideas about justice, and are reflected in the literature known as "mirrors for princes," edifying manuals of rule

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 160. Chardin mentions rhubarb and lapis lazuli: *Voyages*, VIII, 175. Bayani also includes the druggists' herb senna (*le séné*) and *la séminsine* (no translation found) as products brought to Mashhad by the Uzbeks: *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 49.

<sup>381</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 160, cites Fryer, volume III, 11, and Olearius (1662 English translation), 299.

<sup>382</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 85.

for the leaders of the medieval Islamic world. Typifying the classical Shi'i Islamic view according to Lambton, *and* the political ethic of pre-Islamic Iran according to Arjomand, is a letter attributed to 'Ali in 658-59 (though it probably dates from the tenth century). In it,

The appointed governor is urged to rule with justice. To do so, an army is needed, which in turn depends on the revenue of the state. The collection of this revenue depends on the tax collectors, secretaries, and qadis, whose material substance depends on peasants, craftsmen, and merchants. Each of these classes of subjects should be treated with justice and propriety.<sup>383</sup>

A twelfth-century document from Khwarazm relates political stability to the development of agriculture and just administration; Nizam al-Mulk's *Siasat Nameh* is full of admonitions to the tax collectors to be fair, and to the ruler to carry out developmental projects such as maintaining *qanats*, building bridges and hospices, erecting fortresses and founding new cities, etc.; Ghazali wrote that the ruler should avoid the extremes of tyranny and weakness, and cites the saying of the wise that "religion depends upon kingship, kingship upon the army, the army upon material possessions and material possessions and material prosperity upon justice."<sup>384</sup> The eleventh-century *Qabus Nameh* (translated as *A Mirror for Princes*) and Rashid al-Din on the fiscal basis of the state (turn of the fourteenth century), contain similar syllogisms of rule.<sup>385</sup>

Related to these conceptions is the ideal of a hierarchical social order based on the maintenance of definite groups, or classes, of people. Nasir al-Din Tusi, writing in the mid-thirteenth century, discerned four different estates: 1) men of the pen (scholars, bureaucrats and ulama), 2) men of the sword (rulers and the army), 3) men of affairs (merchants, artisans, tax collectors), and 4) "husbandmen, such as agricultural laborers (*barzigarān*), and peasants (*dihāqīn*), those who plant trees and carry on agriculture, who prepare the food of all groups, and without whom the continued existence of anyone would be impossible."<sup>386</sup> Interestingly, a seventeenth-century work, the *Jam'i Mufidi*, has a somewhat different arrangement of the social order:

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 61; see Lambton's views in *Landlord and Peasant*, xx, and *State and Government*, 221, 221 note 4.

<sup>384</sup> All three sources are discussed by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, xxi-xxv.

<sup>385</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 95, cites Ruben Levy, translator and introduction, *A Mirror for Princes, the Qābūs Nāma by Kai Kā'ūs ibn Iskandar, Prince of Gurgan* (New York and London, 1951), 213. Rashid al-Din is quoted by Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 493.

<sup>386</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, xxvi.

The first class consists of the chief military and civil officials and the court; the second comprises the religious classes; the third class is composed of landowners, merchants, craftsmen, such as architects and goldsmiths; and the fourth class of artisans, other craftsmen, the people of the bazaar, and workmen.<sup>387</sup>

The shah's role in this is to see that the classes each carry out their duties and that the harmonious social order is preserved; Jalil al-Din Davvani's work on ethics (ca. 1470) holds that "temporal sovereignty consists in the maintenance of the classes in their appropriate places, in which case only will the state be balanced and its affairs regular."<sup>388</sup> The claims of the shahs to be "Shadow of God on Earth" (*zilla allah fi'l-arzi*), "King of Kings" (*shahanshah*), possessors of *dawla* ("turn of fortune," i.e. the right to rule) and "kingly glory" (*X'arr*), tapped both Islamic and pre-Islamic sources to legitimate their position atop this hierarchy.<sup>389</sup>

The Safavids drew naturally on this centuries-old tradition of sacral kingship and patrimonialism, but they also created a new, complex synthesis evoking several (primarily religious) bases of authority, particularly in the reign of the founder of the dynasty, Isma'il. Isma'il, it will be recalled, made extravagant claims in his poetry variously associating himself with or suggesting he was 'Ali, the Hidden Imam (the *mahdi*) and sometimes Allah himself, and derived great charisma and devoted followers from among the tribes that brought him to power.<sup>390</sup> Beginning with Tahmasp, the extreme mahdistic tenet fell by the wayside, but the Safavids retained three basic sources of legitimacy: 1) representatives of the *mahdi* through alleged descent from the seventh Shi'i Imam, Musa al-Kazim, which led to the claim of possessing 'isma (infallibility); 2) spiritual directors (*murshid*) of the Safavid order of Sufis, from whom they could command absolute obedience, and 3) royal descent from Yazdigird III, the last Sasanian (pre-Islamic) monarch (whose daughter, moreover, was supposed to have married 'Ali's younger son, Husayn).<sup>391</sup>

<sup>387</sup> Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia*, 4. The work is by Muhammad Mufid, the quote from British Museum Oriental ms. 210, f.332b.

<sup>388</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, xxvi, based on the *Akhlaq-i Jalal*.

<sup>389</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 93, 98, 99; Roger Savory, "The Safavid State and Polity," pp. 179-212 in *Iranian Studies*, volume VII, numbers 1-2 (1974), 184.

<sup>390</sup> Arjomand merely notes "the unusual and unstable convergence of the principal charismas of the warlord and of the holy imam" in Isma'il: *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 179.

<sup>391</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 27, and "The Safavid State and Polity," 184.

Under 'Abbas the theocratic basis of rule shifted further in the direction of a more secular absolutism, whose growth is traced by Lambton:

Significant is the difference in phraseology between documents granting *iqṭā's* or appointing officials to various offices in Seljūq times and similar documents in Ṣafavid times. In the former, in so far as the holder is urged to treat the subjects well, it is because they are a charge from God; in the latter it is in order that the subjects, satisfied, should pray for the well-being of the ruler, not because he, being by nature sinful, is in need of their prayers, but because their function as citizens is no longer primarily to worship God but to glorify the ruler. The emphasis has changed. The ruler has become the central figure to the exclusion of all else.<sup>392</sup>

Chardin's view from the 1670s that "there is surely no sovereign in the world as absolute as the king of Persia" is echoed in the 1720s by Père Krusinski: "there is not, perhaps, in the Universe, a King that is more Master of the Life and Fortune of his subjects, than was Shah Abbas and his Successors."<sup>393</sup> 'Abbas to be sure retained certain religious claims to authority as well, which are noted by his chronicler Iskandar Beg Monshi:

He is the beginning of all matters in the secular state, being the world-ordering, wish fulfilling ruler. He is also the initiator of all affairs concerning the religious government, being the domain-governing ruler with the power of controlling the revolutions of the world. In relations to the twins of state and religion, he is the overseer of the organization of religion and government, being highest among those who are high-ranking over the people.<sup>394</sup>

Such claims were doubtless effective among the peasantry and many townspeople, but as we shall see the ulama in the seventeenth century posed challenges to the unmitigated power of the monarchy.

#### IV.B. Religious Authority in Safavid Iran

Shi'a Islam, in the totality of its aspects and manifestations, is a rich and complex object of study far beyond the treatment which can be given of it here (for reasons of both space and competence). What I would like to accomplish in this section is a sketch of ulama-state relations, first in general and with some historical background, and then in particular for the Safavid period. What

<sup>392</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 105 note 2.

<sup>393</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 229; Father Judasz Tadeusz Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, translated to English with a short History of the Sophies, by Father Du Cerceau (London: J. Osborne, 1740 [Reprint Edition 1973 by Arno Press]), 41. The quote is actually from Du Cerceau's prefixed material.

<sup>394</sup> Monshi, *Tarikh-i 'Alam ara-yi 'Abbasi*, 377, as cited and translated by Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 6. Chardin too called the shah the "sovereign ruler, as much for the spiritual as for the temporal": *Voyages*, V, 229.

emerges is a fascinating and radical ambiguity in the central questions of where authority and legitimation lie. The section closes with a brief look at ulama relations with the populace, and some of the pervasive key values of Shi'ism.

Arjomand identifies three possible attitudes toward secular authority in any religious belief system: compliance with authority, opposition to it, or indifference.<sup>395</sup> Following from these are a variety of "modes of religiosity": world-rejecting tendencies in a religion generally lead to "indifference to nonreligious social action" and independence or separation of religion and politics, while world-embracing attitudes are "more ambiguous."<sup>396</sup> When the infant twelfth Imam disappeared without a trace in 873/874, the group which would evolve into the Twelver Shi'is in the next century or so elaborated a theory of occultation (*ghaybat*): that he was in hiding and would appear only at the end of time as the *mahdi* to restore justice to the world. This provided a basis for the separation of religion and politics—good Shi'is were piously *indifferent* to secular power, their focus being other-worldly:

Doctrinal indifference to political theory amounted to granting autonomy to the norms of legitimacy of political rulership. Political rule was thus "secularized." I therefore fully concur with Scarcia, who considers the distinctiveness of Twelver Shi'ism to consist in the basic "separation and reciprocal independence of the theological and the political spheres."<sup>397</sup>

This allowed some Shi'is from the tenth century onward to participate in governments with an aim to make them more ethical and to prevent abuses, while others dissimulated their faith (a practice known as *taqiyya*) before them and avoided them as usurped and evil. But paradoxically, a third position beyond compliance or indifference was derivable from the theory of occultation: politics

<sup>395</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 11. Unfortunately, Arjomand seems to rule out the significance (or utility) of studying non-religious motivations to confer legitimacy on institutions: "habit, self-interest, expediency, utilitarian motivation, and, to a lesser extent, coercion have continuous random incidence among individuals and groups, which is hard for the investigator to trace": *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, 39. The reference is to G. Scarcia, "A proposito del problema della sovranità presso gli Imamiti," in *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*, volume 7 (1957), 118-119. It bears mention that there is major controversy over the political implications of Shi'ism, involving among others Hamid Algar, Ann Lambton, Nikki Keddie and N. Calder (the last in particular tending to argue for the thesis that all government is illegitimate in Shi'ism); Henri Corbin and Hossein Nasr's contention that Shi'ism is Sufism and both are quiescent; and attempted revisions of these positions by Wilfred Madelung, Joseph Eliash, Hamid Enayat and Arjomand himself. See his discussion of this debate in *ibid.*, 22-23, and 279-280 notes 55-61. My presentation in the current paragraph is based on a critical reading of Arjomand.

and religion may be separate spheres while the Imam is in hiding, but the Hidden Imam may appear at any moment to take charge of both spheres. Thus Ibn Babuya al-Saduq (d. 991/2) wrote of the expected *mahdi*:

He it is concerning whose name and descent the Prophet was informed by Allah the Mighty and Glorious, and he it is WHO WILL FILL THE EARTH WITH JUSTICE AND EQUITY, JUST AS NOW IT IS FULL OF OPPRESSION AND WRONG. And it is he through whom Allah will make His faith manifest "in order to supercede all religion, though the polytheists may dislike (it)". He it is whom Allah will make victorious over the whole world until from every place the call the prayer will be heard, and all religion will belong entirely to Allah, Exalted is he above all.<sup>398</sup>

Alongside the attitudes deriving from quietistic mystical piety another mode of religiosity was thus possible—charismatic, millenarian activism. Shi'ism might induce, in fact, two related, but opposite tendencies in its adherents: "normally" other-worldly and quietistic, but at times (and the rise to power of the Safavids around 1500 was an example) messianic, revolutionary and utopian. "Absolute" legitimacy belonged only to the Hidden Imam, but in his absence, in both revolutionary and stable times, "functional" or "derivative" authority might be claimed by both the government and the ulama.<sup>399</sup>

These problems are reproduced when we consider ulama-state relations in the Safavid period. The ulama generally could support some of the elements of Safavid religious policy as the sixteenth century wore on, most notably the basic establishment of Shi'ism as the religion of Iran and Tahmasp's moves to eliminate the extremist beliefs associated by his qizilbash followers with Isma'il. In a sense a kind of compromise was put in place: the divine right of kings as Shadow of God appears in theological works of the period, and the right of the shah to obedience was acknowledged at the same time as his obligation to be just (Arjomand considers this legitimating, but not sacralizing, kingship as political, temporal rule).<sup>400</sup> Lambton notes:

<sup>398</sup> Ibn Babuya, in A.A. Fyzee, *A Shi'ite Creed* (London, 1942), 96, cited by Lambton, *State and Government*, 232. Similarly, Arjomand quotes an interesting tradition of Muhammad al-Baqir, the fifth Imam:

When the *Qa'im* [redresser of wrongs] from the family of the Prophet will rise, he will distribute equally among the people and will establish justice among his subjects.

*The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 39.

<sup>399</sup> These terms are taken from Lambton's resolution of the "just" vs. "usurped" government conundrum: *State and Government*, 254-255 note 45.

<sup>400</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 177; see also Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 86-87, and Lambton, *State and Government*, 282-283.

It would seem that it became customary, in spite of earlier denunciations of the practice, to mention the name of the Safavid ruler in the Friday prayers. This was tantamount to a claim to be recognised as a just ruler.<sup>401</sup>

The prominent scholar Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1699) gives the standard pros and cons of dealing with kings: association with them inevitably means witnessing evil acts, but is permissible to avoid harm to oneself and to prevent tyranny if possible.<sup>402</sup> And, as we have seen, a number of ulama had connections with the court and Iranian elite through office-holding, *suyurghal* tax exemptions and marriages.<sup>403</sup>

But the underlying legitimisation issue of who represented the Imams remained. Already in the sixteenth century the shahs' claims to be the Hidden Imam's deputy had been challenged, and Tahmasp is said to have deferred to the theologian al-Karaki as representative of the Hidden Imam.<sup>404</sup> The existence of conflicting claims in the later seventeenth century is recorded in an interesting passage by Chardin:

The Iranians thus are divided among themselves, concerning who should represent [the Hidden Imam], and be sovereign in both spiritual and temporal matters. The ulama [*gens d'église*], and with them all the devout, and all those who profess a strict observance of religion, claim that in the absence of the imam, the royal throne should be filled by a sinless *mujtahid*...; but the most common opinion, which has prevailed, is that in truth this right belongs to a direct descendant of the imams; but that it is not absolutely necessary that this descendant be pure nor learned to such a degree of perfection, being nonetheless the true lieutenant of God, and vicar of the prophet and imams. As I just said, this is the dominant view, because it establishes and affirms the right of the ruling king.<sup>405</sup>

Chardin goes on to report the considerable underlying antipathy of some of the ulama toward the Safavids:

"How is it possible," say the ulama, "that these impious kings, drinkers of wine, carried away by passion, could be the *vicars of God*, and communicate with heaven, receiving the light necessary to guide the faithful? How can they resolve cases of conscience and

<sup>401</sup> Lambton, *State and Government*, 274.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

<sup>403</sup> See also Ann K.S. Lambton, "Quis Custodiet Custodes? Some Reflections on the Persian Theory of Government (Conclusion)," pp. 125-146 in *Studia Islamica*, volume VI (1956), 131.

<sup>404</sup> Lambton notes the existence of a farman referring to al-Karaki as the *na'ib-i imam* (deputy of the Imam), but raises questions about the extent to which Tahmasp is said to have invested him with authority by pointing out that much of the story dates only to Muhammad Baqir Khwansari, writing in 1869-70, and perhaps seeking to bolster the claims of the nineteenth-century mujtahids: *State and Government*, 276-277. See also *ibid.*, 268, and Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 141-142. It is possible too that the details are merely expressions of Tahmasp's piety, although the issue of ultimate authority at stake was certainly a serious one.

<sup>405</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 208-212.

doubts of faith, as a true *lieutenant of God* must, these men who sometimes can hardly read? Our kings being iniquitous and unjust, their domination is a tyranny, to which God has subjected us to punish us, after taking from the world the legitimate *successor of his prophet*. The supreme throne of the universe should belong only to a *mujtahid*, a man who possesses sanctity and learning beyond the ordinary. It is true that since the *mujtahid* is holy and thus a peaceful man, there must be a king to carry the sword for the exercise of justice; but this should be only as his minister and dependent upon him."<sup>406</sup>

These attitudes found expression in the views that the shahs' confiscations of property were illegal,<sup>407</sup> that the civil courts and urban government were tyrannical and founded on force,<sup>408</sup> and the reluctance on the part of some ulama to accept office and their preference instead to be ranked with the taxable subject population.<sup>409</sup>

Whether such negative evaluations were widespread or not is difficult to discern.<sup>410</sup> There is little doubt that the Safavids tended to impose their hegemony on the rest of society.<sup>411</sup> The strongest legitimating combination was a powerful and pious shah, such as Tahmasp and perhaps 'Abbas could claim to be; in any case, 'Abbas was famous for his degree of control over the religious establishment.<sup>412</sup> The result was, in Arjomand's view, the "coexistence, at times uneasy" of two sets of legitimating principles of authority: "the one from the Shi'ite religion, the other from the pre-Islamic ethos of patrimonialism."<sup>413</sup> One might conclude, however, *contra* the overall thrust of Arjomand's argument, that on the whole religion was simply not a decisive factor in the politics of the Safavid period. It was clearly important, but reasons of historical contingency—its role in the Safavids' rise, and its use by both the state and ulama for legitimation purposes, as well as the splits between clerical notables and religious professionals, and Safavid royal prestige—all these combined to soften its impact in any single direction. This is not to say that the ulama did not possess

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 216.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 319; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 247, citing Thévenot's conversation with a mulla who told him prayers were never said on the shah's land for this reason.

<sup>408</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, VI, 70-71.

<sup>409</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 206; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 3, 35.

<sup>410</sup> See Lambton on the "Safavid dilemma" (i.e. whether to regard the government as just or not): *State and Government*, 280-281.

<sup>411</sup> See Chardin's statements, *Voyages*, VI, 47-48, 75; V, 467; and Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 186.

<sup>412</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 233.

<sup>413</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 9. Lambton concludes:

From the evidence available, it would seem that the position of the shah, so far as it concerned his claim to rule on behalf of the *imām*, when not actually disputed, remained ambiguous.

*State and Government*, 282.

significant power and prestige in this period, as well as lay some of the groundwork for more successful challenges to later, less imposing dynasties.

The religious authority of the ulama among the people, and in particular, the urban population, gradually grew in the course of the institutionalization of Shi'ism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Being seen as possessing charismatic powers of their own (such as performance of *karamat*, minor miraculous deeds), belief in their ability to intercede in the hereafter (*shafa'a*), and the function of leading the Friday prayer—all enhanced their authority. In the sixteenth century too we find mention of *taqlid*—the desirability of “imitating” or following a leading mujtahid, and *ijtihad*—the scholar's competence to determine legal norms—both rather innovative in light of earlier Shi'i jurisprudence.<sup>414</sup> In Nasr's view, “The *mujtahids* were often a protection for the people against the tyranny of various government officials and fulfilled a major function of both a religious and social nature.”<sup>415</sup> Ulama would sometimes intercede on behalf of the peasants with the tax collectors as well.<sup>416</sup>

Shi'ism also fostered the development of a variety of key values, practices and ethics on the part of the individual believer. According to Lambton, “The five principles (*uṣūl*) of Imāmī belief are belief in the unity of God (*tawhīd*), prophethood (*nubuwwa*), the imamate, the day of resurrection (*mi'ād*), and justice (*'adl*).”<sup>417</sup> Faith (*iman*), brotherly love and assistance to others within the community came to be seen as important virtues for salvation.<sup>418</sup> With the spread of Shi'ism too was activated in the mass of the population “a theodicy of suffering centered on the tragedy of Ḥusayn's martyrdom in Karbalā and, more importantly, of an other-worldly soteriology.”<sup>419</sup> Pilgrimage to the shrines of the Imams and their descendants, especially Karbala in Iraq and Mashhad in Khurasan, and strong belief in the powers of 'Ali and the Hidden Imam to fulfill wishes and intercede with God,

<sup>414</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 138-141, 211.

<sup>415</sup> Nasr, “Religion in Safavid Persia,” 276.

<sup>416</sup> Lambton, “Quis Custodiet Custodes? ... (Conclusion),” 131.

<sup>417</sup> Lambton, *State and Government*, 225.

<sup>418</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 28.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, 164. Bausani mentions the new popular and semi-popular religious poetry of the Safavid period, expressing the passion of the early Shi'i martyrs: *The Persians*, 141.

became expressions of popular religiosity.<sup>420</sup> Under the “political ethics” of Islam Arjomand notes *jihad* (both in the sense of a holy war to defend the faith, and an inner struggle to preserve it), enjoining what is good while forbidding evil, and the “authority verse” of the Qur’an: “O believers, obey God, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you....”<sup>421</sup> Finally, as Keddie points out,

The central concepts of justice and injustice or oppression (*‘adl* and *zulm*), important to most believing Muslims, are of overwhelming importance to the Shi’is, and the idea that rulers who have abandoned *‘adl* for *zulm* are following their own will, not God’s, is natural to Shi’i thought.<sup>422</sup>

All of these attitudes, beliefs and practices must be factored into the growing impact of Shi’a Islam on the Iranian population in the seventeenth, and subsequent, centuries.

#### IV.C. Popular Culture, Ideology, Beliefs

In addition to the religious components outlined above, a few other aspects of popular culture and attitudes can be briefly presented. In the tribal sector, for example, we find the phenomena termed *‘asabiyya*, *uymaqiyyat* and *intisab* all acting as principles of unity within the tribe. *‘Asabiyya* carries meanings ranging from “zealous partisanship, party spirit” to “tribal solidarity, clannishness”; Reid defines it as “the obligations of individuals or family groups in any one *uymāq* to support one another according to the priorities of *uymāq* solidarity (*bi jahat-i ta’asub-i uymāqīyāt*).”<sup>423</sup> *Uymaqiyyat* thus carried the sense of tribal loyalty or tribal ties, and contributed to the great fighting spirit of the qizilbash tribesmen.<sup>424</sup> Reid also argues that kinship relations were of less importance than power relations in the authority structure of the Turkic tribes; that various unrelated families tended to cluster around a talented or successful leader (military or otherwise). Out of this arose a set of relationships called *intisab*, meaning “membership, affiliation,” whether in a political,

<sup>420</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 165-166; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 3, 38.

<sup>421</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 33.

<sup>422</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 20.

<sup>423</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 70, 31.

<sup>424</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 50; Dickson, “Shāh Tahmāsb and the Uzbeks,” 215.

religious or genealogical group:

... intisāb involved "a tacit relationship established by mutual consent between a powerful individual and a weaker one." The weaker member attempted to further his master's position and wealth, while his master, in turn, treated the weaker member as his client or protégé.<sup>425</sup>

Interestingly, too, based on the oral traditions of Central Asia, Reid discerns various oppositional tendencies among rural groups, as well as urban craftsmen, religious orders and bandit organizations. The folk epic embodied in the Kōroğlu stories and its widespread basis in Safavid literature of the seventeenth century "implies that a good deal of latent hostility toward the controlling uymāqs existed among the local populations, pastoral and agricultural."<sup>426</sup>

In the urban sector, the guilds possessed long-standing but secret ties with Sufi brotherhoods and fraternal or protective associations. Banani writes that these "posed the danger of possible 'proletarian' dissent and unruliness. 'Abbas I was apparently cognizant of this danger, since by means of the urban police he kept a close watch over the activities of the *aṣṇāf*..."<sup>427</sup> Under the later Safavid onslaught against the Sufis, the guilds were gradually forced toward the Haydari, Ni'mati and other factions, originally Sufi orders which had degenerated into hostile factions, manipulated and encouraged by the state "in order to deprive the bazaars of political unity and strength."<sup>428</sup> In terms of craft ideology generally, the Safavid guilds likely still subscribed to the precepts enunciated by Kay Kavus in the eleventh century:

Whatever craft you have, try to be quick and honest! Be content with a modest gain! Do not turn away customers by overinsistence! You will earn more profits from your occupation, and more people will do business with you ... if you show humility. Be honest both in buying and selling, and avoid avarice! Always keep true weights and measures...! Never have two hearts or two purses (i.e. never be distrustful or mean) with your family (i.e. wife)! Never deal dishonestly with partners! In whatever craft you have, do nothing fraudulent, and do work of the same quality for the informed and uninformed customer!<sup>429</sup>

<sup>425</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 32, quoting Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, volume 1, *Empire of the Gazis* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 166. On tribal leaders see Reid, *ibid.*, 8, citing Jean Cuisenier, "Kinship and Social Organization in the Turco-Mongolian Cultural Area," in E. Forster and O. Ranum, translators and editors, *Family and Society: Selections from Annales, Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 215.

<sup>426</sup> Reid, *ibid.*, 143, based on Nora Chadwick and Victor Zhirmunsky, *The Oral Epics of Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>427</sup> Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 98-99.

<sup>428</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 210.

Such ethical attitudes were shared in the larger urban culture and value system of the *futuwwa* orders, which have existed in Iran since the ninth or tenth century:

Al-Bīrūnī defines a man possessing *futuwwa* as one who takes upon himself the causes of others and bears their difficulties in order to ease their way, does not hold greedily to that which God has placed at his disposal, and is known for forgiveness, patience, gravity, forbearance, and his aspiration to become great through humility. He goes on to state that the *fatā* will sacrifice his own life rather than bear a disgrace or in order to avert an injustice.... The eleventh-century conception of a *fatā*, or *javānmard* (the Persian equivalent of *fatā*), was that of a man who was brave, manly, and patient in everything, faithful to his promises, pure and single-minded; one who did not desire another man's loss for his benefit, but considered his own loss legitimate for the benefit of his friends, did not oppress the weak or commit extortion against prisoners, and repelled evil from the oppressed; one who as he spoke the truth, also listened to it, gave justice even to his own detriment and did not do wrong to him whose salt he had eaten, did not repay evil for good, considered hypocrisy shameful, and did not regard calamity as vexatious.<sup>430</sup>

Ideals of this type were carried earlier in Islamic history by the '*ayyaran*'—'groups of urban youths who in times of anarchy and oppression acted as an unofficial police in defense of the common people'<sup>431</sup>—and in nineteenth-century Iran by the *luris*, local associations of men who would protect their district, make levies on the rich in the name of the poor, and provide for the education of poor and orphaned children.<sup>432</sup> In the Safavid period, *futuwwa* groups included not only guild members but also dervishes and poor people, usually under the guidance of a Sufi shaykh.<sup>433</sup> Finally, we can consider some evidence on attitudes in Iranian society toward authority. Chardin provides the following insights into the nuances involved:

... notwithstanding what I have just said [about the popularity of a mulla Qasim who preached against the government], the Persians have a sincere submissiveness which comes from the heart for the orders of their king, greater perhaps than any other people on earth. They believe that kings are naturally violent and unjust, that one must consider them thus; and nevertheless, however unjust and violent their orders may be, one is obliged to obey them, except in cases of religion or conscience, as if it were a royal prerogative to commit any manner of injustice. One of their expressions of speech is 'to play the king,' to say 'oppress someone and violate justice.'... However, as I have said, they are the most submissive people in the world and one hasn't heard talk of

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, 141, citing Amir Kay Kavus, *A Mirror for Princes, the Qābūs Nāma*, 237-238.

<sup>430</sup> Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia*, 17; the second, eleventh-century conception is based on *A Mirror for Princes, the Qābūs Nāma*, 141.

<sup>431</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 25; see also Ravandi, *Tarikh-i Ijtima'i-yi Iran*, volume 3, 576-582 on *futuwwat*.

<sup>432</sup> Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia*, 18-19. She also notes, 'As in the case of the guilds of '*ayyār*' these associations of *lūrīs* also frequently degenerated into bands of hooligans, and as such would levy toll upon the people of the quarter in which they were': *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>433</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 182.

uprisings or revolts in Persia for two hundred years.<sup>434</sup>

There are undoubtedly opposing currents at work here, a natural recognition of injustice and abuse of power on the part of the population, coupled with an acceptance of the overwhelming power on the side of the court (the extent of uprisings and revolts, which were not negligible in Safavid Iran, will be assessed in Chapter Three). Lambton feels that in "medieval Persia" there existed two contrasting social tendencies: equality, deriving both from Islam and Turkish tribal custom, alongside hierarchy, represented in the ethos of pre-Islamic monarchy and the old—if not to say aristocratic—families of Iran.<sup>435</sup> The issue is certainly complex, with tendencies and counter-tendencies at all levels. For example, "Within the *umma* [community of believers] all were on an equal footing. There were no distinctions of rank, but there were distinctions of function."<sup>436</sup> Moreover, we have traced the emergence of hierarchical relations within the tribal sector above in section III. Reid's discussion of the evolution of Persian miniature painting reveals some of these conflicting attitudes at the court, as well: 1) in the pre-Safavid thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, "Only on extremely rare occasions do the courtiers show subservience toward their ruler and patron in either facial expression or bearing"; 2) in the sixteenth century, we find a new set of hierarchical symbols deployed: "the abasement of self and personal dignity, actual or posed, represented the ideal of subjecting even the proud, perhaps ungovernable amir to the will of the shah. Reticence and the concern for proper behavior can be read in the faces of each of the three figures [pre-Islamic heroes of the *Shah Namah*]*—all amirs. They are standing as if in obeisance to one greater than themselves...*"; 3) by the time of Shah 'Abbas and after in the seventeenth century, the miniatures portray a contradictory complex of less deference, more individuality, lackadaisical body-guards, lack of discipline and "a vicious resentment for authority."<sup>437</sup> Seventeenth-century art, in Richard Ettinghausen's view, became in general more realistic, attentive to the lives of ordinary people, at work and in relaxation.<sup>438</sup> Poetry in the

<sup>434</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 219-220.

<sup>435</sup> Lambton, "The Evolution of the *Iqtā'*," 47.

<sup>436</sup> Lambton, *State and Government*, 13.

<sup>437</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 147-148.

<sup>438</sup> Richard Ettinghausen, "Stylistic Tendencies at the Time of Shah 'Abbas," in *Iranian Studies*, volume VII (1974), 600-603, 610, cited by Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 135-136, who quotes some examples:

"... a kneeling cloth merchant offering his merchandise to a customer; ... a middle-aged man scratching his bald pate just after having taken off his voluminous turban".... Similarly, Ettinghausen sees the frank treatment of sexual themes as "reflections of ordinary interhuman rela-

Safavid period, among many other features, included more of the "language of the streets," according to Savory.<sup>439</sup> Though much more analysis could be done in each of these areas, the picture emerges of a constellation of criss-crossing attitudes toward authority in Safavid Iran: the view that the government was evil, its officials unjust and their wealth usurped, and acquiescence to authority, or even cooperation and participation, existed side by side, most manifestly in the urban setting. The result would seem to be a situation fraught with considerable tension, to be activated from time to time in opposition.

## V. Pre-Capitalist Iran as a Total System

Our long inventory of the most salient aspects of the seventeenth-century Iranian social formation is now—provisionally—complete. What remains is to attempt its characterization on the theoretical plane, as a total system in light of the concepts developed in Chapter One.

### V.A. World-System and Dependency Considerations

In terms of Iran's relations with the West we have determined that 1615 is the key moment from which sustained commercial contact with Europe should be dated. In the 1620s, a direct trade was started up between the Safavid state and the Dutch and English East India companies, a trade which, taken as a whole, was one between more or less equal parties. Favorable to Iran was the fact that the terms and partners in the trade of silk, the key commodity, were determined by Shah 'Abbas in free negotiations with the Europeans. As Ralph Davis has written with regard to the Armenian merchants' dealings with the European companies:

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tionships", again representing a complete break with past tradition in which relations between the sexes were usually interpreted allegorically in terms of the mystical longing of the lover for the divine Beloved."

<sup>439</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 213. Some important perspectives on the nature of the literature of our period are sketched by Ehsan Yar-Shater, "Safavid Literature: Progress or Decline?" pp. 217-270 in *Iranian Studies*, volume VII, numbers 1-2 (1974).

... the English were not foreign traders using economic power to exploit a poor and backward people; they were tolerated foreigners living in a highly civilised community with local merchants, as rich, as well-informed, and as sharp as themselves.<sup>440</sup>

The types of products exchanged too involved manufactures and raw materials on both sides, as well as a favorable balance for Iran in terms of an inflow of silver bullion. On the less favorable side was the fact that transport was in the hands of the Europeans by virtue of their direct sea-routes to the Middle and Far East. The revolution in long-distance shipping after 1500 meant that the apportionment of total profits would favor the party which brought the products to their final markets, and this meant the Europeans, not the shah. So here a gap was opening in technology that would widen into a whole new pattern of trade, though only in the coming two centuries. An assessment of the whole pattern of Iran's relations with the West as of circa 1630 must conclude therefore that despite the real significance of the opening of trade relations for the Europeans, *there is no possibility of dependence* at this early stage in the emergence of a capitalist world-economy.

In Wallerstein's world-systemic terms, seventeenth-century Iran would be classified as 'a world-empire in the external arena.' World-empires were world-systems (i.e., 'a unit with a single division of labor and multiple cultural systems'), with a common political system:

World-empires were basically redistributive in economic form. No doubt they bred clusters of merchants who engaged in economic exchange (primarily long-distance trade), but such clusters, however large, were a minor part of the total economy and not fundamentally determinative of its fate. Such long-distance trade tended to be, as Polanyi argues, 'administered trade' and not market trade, utilizing 'ports of trade'.<sup>441</sup>

The pattern of trade and commerce in Safavid Iran certainly fits this characterization. And likewise, in Skocpol's exposition of Wallerstein's concept of world-empire, she calls it one 'in which a functional economic division of labor, occupationally not geographically based, is subsumed under an overarching, tribute-collecting imperial state.'<sup>442</sup> This, too, applies fairly well to Safavid Iran, collecting tribute from the diverse parts of its domains—Georgia, Armenia, the Caspian, Kurdistan, parts of Iraq and Central Asia, Khuzistan/Arabistan and Baluchistan. On the relationship of the emerging

<sup>440</sup> Ralph Davis, *Aleppo and Devonshire Square: English Traders in the Levant in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, [1963] 1967), 146, cited by Ferrier, 'The Armenians and the EIC,' 61-62 note 8.

<sup>441</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The rise and future demise of the world-capitalist system: concepts for comparative analysis,' pp. 1-36 in *The Capitalist World Economy. Selected Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 6.

<sup>442</sup> Skocpol, 'Wallerstein's World Capitalist System,' 1077.

European to the non-European world-systems in the sixteenth century, Wallerstein writes:

Once the Hapsburg dream of world-empire was over—and in 1557 it was over forever—the capitalist world-economy was an established system that became almost impossible to unbalance. It quickly reached an equilibrium point in its relations with other world-systems: the Ottoman and Russian world-empires, the Indian Ocean proto-world-economy. Each of the states or potential states within the European world-economy was quickly in the race to bureaucratize, to raise a standing army, to homogenize its culture, to diversify its economic activities...<sup>443</sup>

Iran was rather marginal to and thus not part of the "Indian Ocean proto-world-economy" (which encompassed Java, Ceylon and East Africa); rather, though Wallerstein nowhere attempts to explicitly so classify it, the Safavid social formation clearly belongs with the Ottoman and Russian ones, as a world-empire in its own right. Interestingly, under 'Abbas it had accomplished or at least undertaken most of what the successful north-west European core states then emerging had done: bureaucratize, raise a standing army, homogenize its culture, and (to a lesser extent relative to Europe, but significantly in terms of its own predecessors), diversify its economic activities.

By 1640, vis-a-vis the European capitalist world-economy, Iran should be considered part of the "external arena." Again, Wallerstein:

There was a transit trade across Russia between western Europe and Persia. Yet we argue that Persia is certainly outside this world-economy and so even was Russia. Russia outside, but Poland inside. Hungary inside, but the Ottoman Empire outside. On what basis are these distinctions determined?

It is not a question of the simple volume of trade or its composition.... the Americas inside and the East Indies outside, or so we contend.

We shall denote this distinction as one between the periphery of a world-economy and its external arena. The periphery of a world-economy is that geographical sector of it wherein production is primarily of lower-ranking goods (that is, goods whose labor is less well rewarded) but which is an integral part of the overall system of the division of labor, because the commodities involved are essential for daily use. The external arena of a world-economy consists of those other world-systems with which a given world-economy has some kind of trade relationship, based primarily on the exchange of preciosities, what was sometimes called the "rich trades."<sup>444</sup>

The Ottoman Empire to Iran's west, and Asia to its east, both belong, for Wallerstein, in the external arena in the sixteenth century.<sup>445</sup> In the seventeenth century both may have begun to move closer to

<sup>443</sup> Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I*, 26.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 301-302.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, 325, 332.

the periphery of the European world-system, the Ottomans on a basis of political-military equality, parts of the Far East increasingly as proto-colonies. Neither, however, really entered into peripheral status, as had all of "Latin" America by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>446</sup> Safavid Iran was even further from such incorporation than the Ottomans and Asians in our period up to 1630—at once economically and politically more difficult to penetrate and control. The Europeans were forced to come there with cash if they wanted Iranian silk, and imposed no terms on the seller (unlike the Asian spice trade). The results of the above analysis clearly situate the Iranian social formation of ca. 1630 as a *world-empire* in the *external arena* of the emerging capitalist world-system. Indeed, as much as any non-European world-empire, Iran could consider Europe as part of *its* external arena. That is, both Iranian and European economies, though now in contact with one another, were relatively self-sufficient and when seeking the products of the other, did so as equals.

The most plausible alternative conceptualization of Iran's place among the world-systems of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries might be as part of the greater regional framework of an "Islamic" or "Middle Eastern" world-system, that would embrace Safavid Iran, the Ottoman Empire, the Mughal empire, and the somewhat less powerful Uzbeks in Mavara'annahr (see Map 2.3). This has been suggested by Mazzaoui and Hodgson, among others. The latter writes:

The sixteenth century undeniably marks the peak of Muslim political power, taken all in all. How the Muslim powers might have fared measured against China we cannot know, but one of the three empires, the Ottoman, could alone defeat any actual alliance of Christian European powers; whereas among themselves the empires treated each other as diplomatic equals and, in such clashes as they had, showed themselves to be not far from each other's equals in power.... So far as there was any genuinely 'international' law in the world in that period, it was the body of protocol and custom that governed relations among the far-flung Muslim states; and if one had to speak of an 'international' language in the world then, it would have to be not the relatively parochial French or Latin but Persian, the language of most of their correspondence.<sup>447</sup>

This has the salutary effect of putting European power in a broader perspective, where the Islamic world assumes its full stature. It is interesting too that ambassadors to the Safavid court were

<sup>446</sup> According to Wallerstein, Europe only *begins* to incorporate parts of Asia after 1700 or so: *ibid.*, 343-344. Murat Çizakça concludes that the Ottoman Middle East was incorporated rather prematurely into the world capitalist economy from 1550 to 1650, after which pressure let up until the period of full incorporation from 1830 to 1900: "Incorporation of the Middle East into the European World-Economy," 374.

<sup>447</sup> Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 3, 47. See also Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Şafawids*, 13.

honored according to the status of their sovereigns, with those from the Mughal and Ottoman empires receiving a robe of honor, winter and summer clothing, a harnessed horse, sword and dagger, while Europeans received only the sword or the dagger and a horse without harnessing.<sup>448</sup> Such a perspective is somewhat helpful, then. Hodgson and Mazzaoui are interested primarily in culture and politics, and wish us to see the greatness of the Muslim world in this epoch. On the other hand, the Islamic world-system was not an integrated one politically, economically, or even religiously after the Safavids' rise to power as a Shi'i state, and this puts us back on Wallerstein's terrain with a set of competing world-empires—Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal. All of these considerations on Iran's essentially singular and intact place in the international and regional frameworks of the seventeenth century, throw into relief the *internal* characteristics of the Safavid social formation, to which we now turn.

#### V.B. Modes of Production in Seventeenth-Century Iran

A number of the secondary sources which have been drawn on in the course of this chapter have attempted to characterize seventeenth-century Iran as a whole, usually from a non-Marxist perspective. Minorsky, for example, employs the term "tribal feudalism" to describe the pre-'Abbas I system, and speaks of the "great transformation" in the period to 1630 from tribal feudalism to "patrimonial absolutism."<sup>449</sup> This lead has been followed by Keddie, with "tribal feudalism," Bausani's "pastoral nomadic feudalism" and Banani's "patrimonial absolutism."<sup>450</sup> Reid offers the term "uymaq system" (tribal state), while Farmayan notes the transition from Isma'il's "theocratic-feudal form of government" to 'Abbas's "military and bureaucratic" centralized state.<sup>451</sup>

Hodgson's panoptic view of Islamic history provides the general term "agrarianate citted society"

<sup>448</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 497.

<sup>449</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 13-14.

<sup>450</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 12-13, 20-21; Bausani, *The Persians*, 124, 125, 143; Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 101, 105. Emphasis on patrimonialism draws on a Weberian tradition of sociological analysis: see Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), volume 1, 231-232.

<sup>451</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 66-67; Farmayan, *The Beginnings of Modernization in Iran*, 25.

and specific characterization of Safavid Iran as heir to the "military patronage state," as a "bureaucratic absolutism" and as an "agrarian absolutism."<sup>452</sup> Each of these conceptualizations has its merits, not the least being that their authors include some of the most perceptive and empirically well-informed twentieth-century historians of Iran, Islam and the Middle East. While it is impossible to discuss their theoretical approaches in detail here, it should be noted that the terminology tends to disclose two basic (if somewhat overlapping) orientations: 1) these are largely *political* conceptualizations—patrimonial absolutism, agrarian absolutism, theocratic feudalism, tribal state, military patronage state, and 2) a number of them are hybrid entities—tribal feudalism, pastoral nomadic feudalism, agrarianate citted society. Without denying the interest of the first, primarily political approach to characterizing seventeenth-century Iran as a total system, it is the second set of terms—those of Minorsky, Bausani, Keddie and Hodgson—which are of particular significance for the present analysis, since they each hint at the *mixed* economic bases of the Iranian social formation,<sup>453</sup> to which we shall return after a look at some Marxist approaches.

A majority of the Marxist historians of Iran have simply characterized its pre-capitalist social formation through history as feudal. The Soviet scholar N. A. Kuznetsova is quite typical: Iran from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries had a "feudal system of production."<sup>454</sup> Nomani's thesis is that Iran possessed feudal production relations from the third or fourth centuries A.D. to the fifteenth century (and presumably beyond into the Safavid period), with the *iqta'* equivalent to a fief and peasants bound to the soil by the Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>455</sup> The distinguished Soviet Middle East scholar I. P. Petrushevsky refers to a "specifically Iranian feudalism" and "Asiatic feudalism" from pre-Mongol Iran onwards.<sup>456</sup> Saleh finds Iran feudal from the

<sup>452</sup> Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 3, 5, 50. Cf. also his interesting remarks on the earlier decentralized "a'yan-amir system" of urban notables and military commanders, at its height in the eleventh through fifteenth centuries: *The Venture of Islam*, volume 2, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 64ff., 91ff.

<sup>453</sup> Reid's discussion of Iran's economic organization likewise identifies several sectors—the urban market, agriculture and pastoralism: *Tribalism and Society*, 58.

<sup>454</sup> Kuznetsova, "Urban industry in Persia," 308. She makes this point only in passing, however, as her focus is on the guilds and not the whole system.

<sup>455</sup> Nomani, "Origin and Development of Feudalism in Iran," 67, 70-72, 117. This dissertation is misleadingly subtitled "300-1600 A.D."; the analysis stops in the 1400s.

<sup>456</sup> Petrushevsky, "Iran under the Il-khāns," 514, 515.

The most typical features of specifically Iranian feudalism antedating the [Mongol] conquest survived it also. Such were the outstanding importance of irrigation; the coexistence of settled agri-

eighth-century Abbasid caliphate on, with the addition of a nomadic element after the eleventh century, a "decentralized form of hybrid feudalism" under the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Timurids and Aq Quyunlu, and, during the reign of the Safavids:

Despite the fact that during the entire course of this period the dominant underlying mode of production would remain feudal, the nature of the feudal formation was to undergo various alterations, going from a basically decentralized (though politically united) feudalism supported by a strong tribal component, to a highly State centralized and commercially advanced feudalism with a much-muted tribal component, and finally back to a decentralized and decommercialized formation with a steadily disintegrating and powerless central government.<sup>457</sup>

'Abbas's "state-centered feudalism" would be followed in the eighteenth-century by the Zands' "feudal-nomad formation."<sup>458</sup> Thomas Ricks has characterized eighteenth-century Iran as simply a "late-feudal pre-capitalistic society."<sup>459</sup>

There are of course many definitions, both Marxist and otherwise, of what precisely constituted feudalism as a form of society. Marx's own views on feudalism are summed up by Perry Anderson:

... feudalism typically involves the juridical serfdom and military protection of the peasantry by a social class of nobles, enjoying individual authority and property, and exercising an exclusive monopoly of law and private rights of justice, within a political framework of fragmented sovereignty and subordinate fiscality, and an aristocratic ideology exalting rural life. It will be seen at once how remote this comprehensive heuristic schedule is from the few, simple tabs since often used to label a social formation as feudal.<sup>460</sup>

Anderson criticizes the Marxist and non-Marxist tendencies to make of feudalism a more or less universal category for pre-capitalist societies: "No term has undergone such an indiscriminate and

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culture and nomadic and semi-nomadic cattle-breeding; the absence of *demesne* and *corvée* in the villages; the combination of large-scale feudal landownership with small-scale peasant tenants; the predominance of product rent (money and labour rent had only secondary importance); the growth of the military fief system; the close connexion between the big merchants and the caravan trade and a group of feudal lords, and even their coalescence; the absence of self-governing towns, so typical of western Europe in the Middle Ages; and the widespread use of slave labour in the crafts and agriculture (irrigation and market gardening) alongside the exploitation of the labour of dependent peasants.

*Ibid.*, 514. I shall argue that this is so "specific" as to really be no longer feudal!

<sup>457</sup> Saleh, "Social Formations in Iran," 88. See also 15, 48, 162-163 on the pre-Safavid periods.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, 97, 121.

<sup>459</sup> Thomas M. Ricks, "Politics and Trade in Southern Iran and the Gulf, 1745-1765," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Indiana University (1975), 6, 9, 12.

<sup>460</sup> Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 407. For a different Marxist approach see Rodney Hilton, editor, *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1978), 30. For two non-Marxist discussions see Weber, *Economy and Society*, volume II, 1070-1100, and the works of Marc Bloch, including *Feudal Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).

pervasive diffusion as that of feudalism, which has often in practice been applied to any social formation between tribal and capitalist poles of identity, unstamped by slavery.<sup>461</sup> What was widespread was large scale agrarian property with peasant producers, but landlordism is not the same as feudalism.<sup>462</sup> Marx himself seems to have finally felt that Mughal India and its precursor the Delhi Sultanate were not feudal, and Anderson refers to “the great Asian Empires that never knew feudalism—Arab, Turkic, Indian or Chinese.”<sup>463</sup>

What then of Safavid Iran? Lambton vigorously disputes the equation of the *iqta'* or *tiyul* with the European fief, pointing out that the former were delegated rather than contracted, not based on a need for protection and lacked any sense of mutual obligation: “The source of all grants of *iqṭā'* or *tiyūl* and *soyūrghāl* was the absolute sovereignty of the sultan or shāh. They were entirely matters of grace and lacked any element of vassalage or contract...”<sup>464</sup> Minorsky cautions that “western European terms, useful as parallels, are dangerous as “equivalents”.”<sup>465</sup> Hodgson too argues that the *iqta'* cannot be equated with feudalism unless the latter “is used in a completely vague way to refer to any social order in which large landlords played a dominant role,” stressing that the Islamic world had neither an enservfed peasantry, nor a stable landed gentry.<sup>466</sup> My own arguments against the characterization of Safavid Iran as feudal are several. Firstly, the tribes were too obviously important, as well as urban craft production, to characterize the *whole* social formation as feudal in any meaningful sense. Secondly, the “full feudal complex” as Anderson argues and Lambton substantiates, especially in its political and ideological aspects, was absent, while the Safavid state was too powerful and centralized under ‘Abbas to be “feudal.” Finally, even in the agrarian sector of the economy, as the empirical analysis in section III has shown, there were many more differences than similarities with the feudal mode of production. Some of the most salient aspects of the Iranian case include: the absence of juridical serfdom and a hereditary nobility, the lack of widespread labor

<sup>461</sup> Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 401.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 405, 408.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 424, and 405-407 for Marx on India, based on his marginal notes on the Russian historian Kovalevsky.

<sup>464</sup> Lambton, “The Evolution of the *Iqṭā'*,” 50; also 41, 43, 46, 47, 49, and Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 53-54.

<sup>465</sup> Minorsky, “A *Soyūrghāl* of Qāsim b. Jāhangīr Aq-qoyunlu,” 944 note 1.

<sup>466</sup> Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 2, 49 note 7, 49, 80-81.

services and the extraction of surplus instead in the form of in-kind or money rent, the fact that *tiyuls* were conditional and granted by the state rather than hereditary, and that those who held them lived in towns rather than in the countryside (thus there were no manors and domain lands for the peasants to work on), and the absence for the most part of significant seigniorial rights and legal jurisdiction by the assignee over the peasants. All of these points rule out in my view the possibility of theorizing the Safavid social formation in whole or in part, in terms of its labor process or its relations of production, as having a feudal mode of production.

The only other mode of production that has been suggested for pre-capitalist Iran is the much-disputed Asiatic mode of production. On the existence of an Asiatic mode of production in Marx's own thinking we have the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, published in 1859: "In broad outline Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society."<sup>467</sup> A single, unified conception of the Asiatic mode of production is not easily inferred however from Marx's scattered writings on the subject, although some of the key elements which emerge include the absence of private property in land, with a strong state claiming to be the sole possessor of land and collecting a tax/tribute/rent from the many small self-sufficient villages at the base of society.<sup>468</sup> Several strong cases have been made in recent decades for the utility of the concept, perhaps especially that of Maurice Godelier, who calls for the rejection of those aspects of Marx which are questionable (such as traces of "Oriental despotism," theses on "Asian stagnation" and empirical errors on pastoralism, castes and village autonomy). For Godelier, the Asiatic was a transitional mode of production in the general evolution of societies from egalitarian-communal tribal structures toward a class-divided social structure and a state, in its mature phase normally based on a hereditary dynasty whose head

<sup>467</sup> Karl Marx, "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (published 1859), in Robert C. Tucker, editor, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, second edition (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, [1972] 1978), 5.

<sup>468</sup> Some of Marx's key statements are found in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, Ltd., 1975), 80-81, 82, 85-86; Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, translated by Jack Cohen with an introduction by Eric J. Hobsbawm (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 69-70; and Marx, *Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, translated, with a forward by Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 473-474. Anderson cites most of these, and offers his own list of Marx's main elements of the Asiatic mode of production in *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 483.

empowered officials to collect the taxes, stimulating urbanization with the surplus extracted from the rural sector and fostering the growth of state-controlled trade.<sup>469</sup> Lawrence Krader identifies its characteristics as including: agrarian societies, with classes and a state, producing only a small surplus appropriated from a subsistence-level population by a wealthy court, some (but not much) trade between villages, not much money in circulation, collective taxation, limited capital formation, weak class oppositions (expressed nonetheless in folklore), and an absolute sovereign whose power was yet limited both by custom and the difficulties of communication and transportation with the villages. He concludes that labor was unfree, but in a customary sense, thus distinct from feudalism's explicit dependence of the serf on the lord.<sup>470</sup> John Taylor theorizes that "the determinate relation of production which governs the extraction of surplus labor in the Asiatic mode is one existing between village and state" and that this occurs on an ideological level rooted in the monarch's (usually divine) right to tribute.<sup>471</sup>

The case for Iran as an example of the Asiatic mode of production has been argued by Fattaneh Mehrain and Ervand Abrahamian. Both of their studies deal explicitly with the nineteenth-century Qajar social formation but the only logical implication is that they would apply to the seventeenth century as well, if not better, since Iran had more extensive capitalist social relations as the nineteenth century wore on. Mehrain notes:

A social formation in certain ways similar to this description of Marx [on the Asiatic mode in the *Grundrisse* and other writings] still persisted in Iran in the nineteenth century and elsewhere. A trichotomous social-economic system of urban, rural and tribal units (each composed of smaller self-sufficient socially cohesive and tightly knit communities) co-existed under an over-arching state that consisted of a ruler, his family, and his staff (in most cases a tribe itself). Each of these units (tribes, towns and villages, i.e., settled tribal populations composed of numerous competing communities) were semi-isolated and economically almost self-sufficient units each with its own hierarchical

<sup>469</sup> Maurice Godelier, "The Concept of the 'Asiatic Mode of Production' and Marxist Models of Social Change," pp. 204-257 in David Seddon, editor, *Relations of Production* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 224.

<sup>470</sup> Lawrence Krader, *The Asiatic Mode of Production. Sources, Development and Critique in the Writings of Karl Marx* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Company, 1975), 286-296, 299-300.

<sup>471</sup> Taylor, *From Modernization to Modes of Production*, 179. Taylor contrasts this ideological level with the "feudal mode, where the noble's right to surplus in the form of ground-rent is achieved through a political intervention": *ibid.*, 182. It strikes me that the Asiatic mode of production relies on not only ideological, but also kinship, political and military means to extract its surplus, while feudalism relies on a somewhat different combination of political, military and ideological means.

social organizations.<sup>472</sup>

Abrahamian's article, "European Feudalism and Middle Eastern Despotisms," is a somewhat looser application of the Asiatic mode of production, particularly its "fragmentation thesis" on the significance of many isolated villages dominated by a powerful state.<sup>473</sup>

In my view the Asiatic mode of production is a conceptual improvement on feudalism for the case of seventeenth-century Iran, if a unitary mode of production must be posited. Its strongest points are the recognition of the indeterminacy of private property in land (with remnants of village communal forms, individual peasant tenancy, theoretical state ownership and de facto elite control of revenues all coexisting), and the overwhelming role played by the monarchic state (with its control over vast amounts of the land revenues, dominance in long-distance trade and partial regulation of craft production). But just as feudalism should not be read off from the prevalence of landlordism, the Asiatic mode ought not be imputed to every pre-capitalist non-European society:

A ubiquitous 'Asiatism' represents no improvement on a universal 'feudalism': in fact, it is even less rigorous a term. What serious historical unity exists between Ming China and Megalithic Ireland, Pharaonic Egypt and Hawaii? It is perfectly clear that such social formations are unimaginably distant from one another.<sup>474</sup>

If the Asiatic mode applies to any subset of non-European societies it might well be the three great empires of Islamic Asia—the Ottomans, Mughals and Safavids. But to consider just the Safavid case, we must acknowledge both the very large tribal component and the significant non-state directed craft production and regional trade as falling largely outside the model. The overall Safavid social formation was likewise hardly stagnant in the time of Shah 'Abbas. And the agrarian sector was much more complex and variegated than state ownership imposed on self-sufficient villages, as it included private landowners, *vaqf* land and individual peasant cultivators in addition to (admittedly) much crown land. To be truly applicable to Safavid Iran, then, the Asiatic mode of production

<sup>472</sup> Fattaneh Mehrain, "Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States in Periphery Formations: A Case Study of Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1979), 58-59; see also 73-74, 112. Mehrain implies at other points that there may have been two or more pre-capitalist modes of production (feudal and tribal in addition to the Asiatic), but this is never explicitly drawn out and the result is a certain amount of conceptual unclarity in the analysis of pre-capitalist social structure: *ibid.*, 260, 262. This work is nevertheless a source of provocative and generally fruitful attempts at reconceptualizing Iran in a sophisticated Marxian framework.

<sup>473</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, "European Feudalism and Middle Eastern Despotisms," pp. 129-156 in *Science & Society*, volume XXXIX, number 2 (Summer 1975), *passim*, especially 155-156.

<sup>474</sup> Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 486.

would have to be stretched into a hybrid combination of peasant, tribal, urban and state sectors, and the resulting mix would be rather different from the Mughal or Ottoman cases.

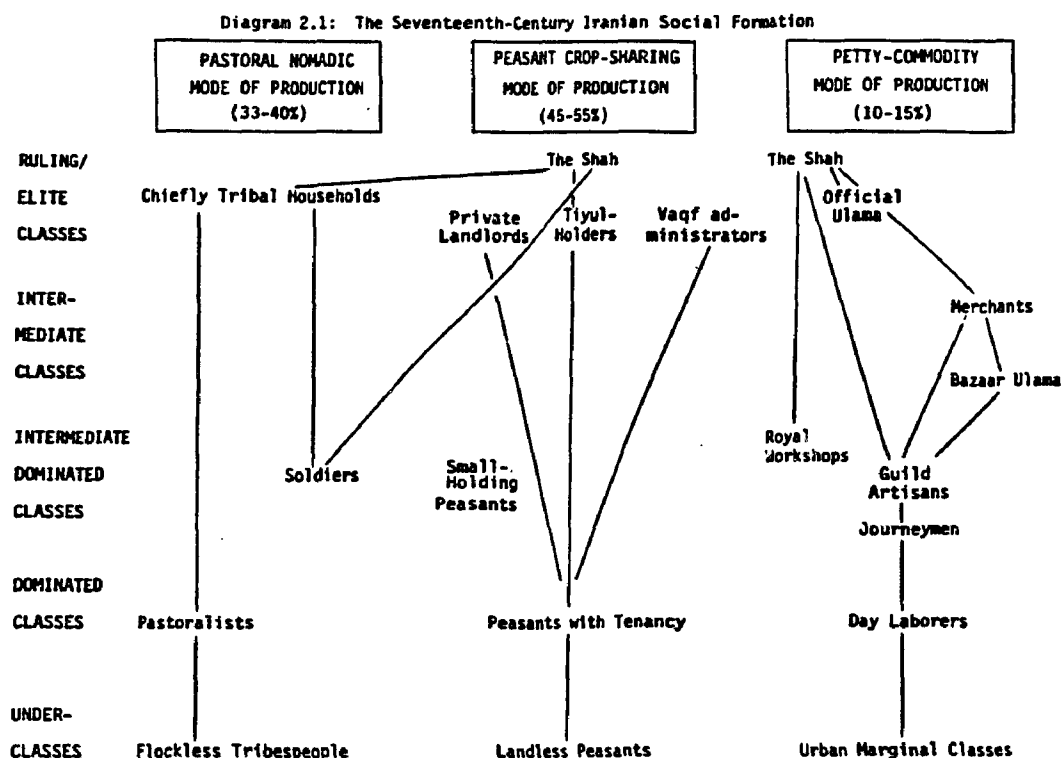
Another solution to the problem is possible, and I would argue, preferable, to the adoption of a unitary feudal or Asiatic mode of production for the case of seventeenth-century Iran. The “modes of production solution” is to view the whole system as a social formation made up of three distinct modes of production corresponding to the three major economic sectors that have been analyzed in detail in part III—a pastoral nomadic mode of production in the rural tribal sector, a peasant crop-sharing mode of production in the agricultural sector, and a petty-commodity mode of production in the urban sector (the nomenclature adopted will be discussed below). Each of these modes of production had its own set of ruling, intermediate, dominated and underclasses, its own type of labor process and its own form of surplus appropriation. There were significant articulations between some of the major classes and groups across modes of production, and these can largely explain the nature and dominant position of the Safavid state in this period. Finally, while the criteria for distinguishing the class structure are primarily economic and related to the mechanisms of surplus appropriation, the political and ideological levels of analysis can also be roughly mapped out for each mode of production, again with significant articulations among them. Diagram 2.1 illustrates the modes of production approach to seventeenth-century Iran.

The existence of a pastoral nomadic mode of production is fairly straightforward on both the theoretical and empirical planes. Marx himself seems to have considered it a distinct mode of production, a judgment with which Anderson concurs, stressing the “collective property of immobile wealth (land) and individual property of mobile wealth (herds).”<sup>475</sup> As my own discussion in section III indicated this sector of the economy was controlled by a ruling class comprising various tribal chiefs and their households, and supported at the base by a dominated class of pastoralists who comprised an overwhelming majority of all tribespeople. Below these was an underclass of

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 405. Cf. also Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, 217-228:

It is fairly clear that Marx himself believed nomadic pastoralism to constitute a distinct mode of production, as can be seen from his comments on pastoral societies in his 1857 Introduction: *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie (Einleitung)*, pp. 19, 27.

*Ibid.*, 222 note 3.



individuals who owned no or insufficient flocks, and living somewhat better than the ordinary pastoralist was an intermediate dominated class of tribesmen serving in the Safavid and provincial armies. Both tribal khans and soldiers thus had significant links to systems outside their own mode of production through association with the Safavid state. The surplus production of the pastoralists was appropriated for the most part by their chiefs, and to a small degree by the state's tax on animals.

The "peasant crop-sharing mode of production," as I have named it, is the most controversial of the three modes of production present in seventeenth-century Iran, for the simple reason that the empirical analysis has compelled me to coin a "new" mode of production as an alternative to an unsatisfactory feudalism in the agrarian sector of the economy, and for the further reason of the complexity inherent in the several forms of land-tenure in the Safavid period. The theoretical precedents for it, such as they are, include Marx's references to the mode of production of the French peasantry in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," and A.V. Chayanov's work on peasant economy,

where he identifies up to eight possible types of agrarian economy in a sophisticated analysis based on a close study of pre-1917 Russia.<sup>476</sup> As the data presented in section III tended to show, the agrarian sector surplus was appropriated in the form of a share of the crop produced by hereditary peasant tenants, and this holds true by and large whether the dominant class involved consisted of private landlords (in a small number of cases), the shah on his crown lands (the royal domain), *tiyul*-holders on the state lands assigned to them by the shah, or *vagf* administrators. At the bottom of this mode of production then we have a dominated class of several million peasants with tenancy rights, and at the top four separate dominant class groups. There was also a numerically small group of small-holding medium peasants, including some sayyids, and an underclass of (possibly large numbers of) landless peasants. Since the primary form of surplus appropriation was through a share of the crop produced by the peasants for their own immediate consumption and with their own more or less autonomous labor process, I have termed this mode of production the peasant crop-sharing mode.

Finally, the petty-commodity mode of production in the urban sector also presents a complicated picture, this time by virtue of the significance of several intermediate classes and groups such as artisans, merchants and ulama within it.<sup>477</sup> It was divided in two, as we saw, with the shah controlling the artisans of the royal workshops, and a "private sector" of guild artisans, merchants, some of the ulama, and the urban lower classes. In both subsectors the basic labor process was petty-commodity craft production by artisans working with their own tools and (in the private sector) in their own shops. At the top of the urban economy was the shah, along with the official ulama he appointed. Just below were the wealthiest merchants, Armenians perhaps more than Iranians, who traded in both craft and agricultural goods. The guild masters may on the whole be considered an intermediate class in terms of their average wealth, control over artisan-journeymen and day laborers,

<sup>476</sup> Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (published 1852), in Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 608, and A.V. Chayanov, "On the Theory of Non-Capitalist Economic Systems," translated by Christel Lane, pp. 1-28 in Daniel Thorner, Basile Kerblay and R.E.F. Smith, editors, *A.V. Chayanov on The Theory of Peasant Economy* (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1966), passim, especially 25.

<sup>477</sup> For theoretical elaboration, see the special issue of *Social Analysis* on petty commodity production: number 20 (1986).

and subordination through taxes to the state and in some cases through exchange to the merchants. The "popular ulama" of the bazaar may be ranked along with the guild masters through their multiple social, economic and religious contacts. The artisans and laborers of the royal workshops were subordinate to the shah, but enjoyed fairly good living conditions as we have seen. The variety of street vendors, artisans without shops and day laborers were clearly dominated classes in the petty-commodity sector, and below them were the poor and unemployed of the urban marginal underclass. Surplus production in the petty-commodity mode of production accrued in small measure to master artisans, and in far greater measure to the large-scale merchants and the shah. The ulama, as a social group with a range of "class" situations, must be located at more than one place in the urban sector, with non-economic as well as economic ties to various partners, notably the shah/state and merchant/artisan classes.

The modes of production approach permits us to see more clearly the reasons for the dominant overall position of the Safavid state in the period of Shah 'Abbas. The ruling class of Iran was spread over the three modes of production, and consisted of a disunified array of tribal khans and governors, landlords and *tiyul*-holders, official ulama and perhaps some large merchants, in addition to the shah and his household. The Safavids not only benefited from this fragmentation of their potential rivals, but were themselves involved in each of the modes of production—as leaders of the tribal and standing army, possessors of crown lands and distributors of *tiyuls*, owners of the royal workshops, collectors of guild taxes and customs and tolls from the merchants, and monopolizers of the lucrative trade in raw silk and a few other items. No other elite group was in a position to capture more than a fraction of Iran's overall surplus, due both to location in a sole mode of production and the need to divide it among themselves, whereas the Safavids took a proportion of almost all of it.<sup>478</sup> Such a situation goes a long way toward explaining the overwhelming hegemony of the Safavid state in the reign of 'Abbas.

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<sup>478</sup> This idea is suggested by Mehran, "Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 75, and Homa Katouzi-an, "The Aridisolatic Society: A Model of Long-Term Social and Economic Development in Iran," pp. 259-282 in *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 15, number 2 (May 1983), 270.

The shah's power also cut across the various levels that Anderson, Taylor and others posit for a mode of production—it was political and ideological as well as economic and military. As we have seen, the major classes in each of the three modes of production had their own value systems—craft ideology and the *futuwwa* ideal among artisans, merchants and the urban lower classes, tribal feeling and *intisab* among pastoralists and their chiefs. These ideological systems were for the most part located within one or another mode of production. The only groups with legitimating authority that crossed modes of production were the Safavids themselves as monarchs and the ulama as the bearers of Islam, and we have seen how in the main the Safavids succeeded in imposing their claims (including the religious ones) in this period. The fact that they could draw on economic, political and ideological resources in more than one mode of production undoubtedly constituted a major source of their hegemonic position in Iranian society, with rivalry coming from groups like the ulama and tribal chiefs who were also, though to a lesser extent, involved in more than one mode of production and/or dominant on several levels.

Finally, Banani, Keddie and Reid among others have argued that pre-capitalist Iran should be conceptualized in "vertical" estate-type divisions as much as "horizontal," class ones.<sup>479</sup> There is certainly an element of truth to such claims, but neither does this preclude the objective existence of classes in Safavid Iran. In fact, the vertical divisions emerge in a new light once *several* modes of production are recognized. When tribal pastoralists, for example, came into contact more frequently with their own chiefs than with urban artisans or even sedentary villagers, it should not be surprising that they were bound by various ties to the elite that dominated them and were separated in many ways from the other dominated classes of Iran. That there was no cohesive dominated class, class consciousness or class action across the modes of production (just as there was no unified ruling class) does not diminish the reality of classes within each mode of production. In fact, the difficulties of alliance between dominated classes located in different modes of production become more intelligible in the light of the present analysis: in Lukacsian terms, it has hopefully been

<sup>479</sup> Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 105, and more to the point, Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 6, 66-67, and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 36, and Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 137.

demonstrated that classes-in-themselves (with definite objective positions in a system of unequal social relations) did exist in seventeenth-century Iran. What Reid and others suggest by an accent on vertical groupings is the difficulty of the formation of classes-for-themselves (that is, with consciousness of their objective situation and collective organization and action based on this).

This last issue will play a role in the analysis of social change in Safavid Iran, the subject of Chapter Three, where both the developmental tendencies of the Safavid social formation and the political and social movements which found expression in the "long" Safavid period from 1500 to 1800 will be analyzed. Our argument here has been concerned with making the case for a modes of production approach as a more adequate conceptualization than others of the pre-capitalist political economy of seventeenth-century Iran, a social formation that was preponderantly agrarian (but not feudal), with extensive tribes and significant urban development.

### Chapter Three

#### Social Change in Iran from 1500 to 1800

If the Revolution of *Persia* has been so astonishing, when taken only in a general View, and according to the very imperfect Ideas we can form of it from the *Gazettes* and other publick News Papers, we may affirm, it will appear still more amazing, when we come to give a particular Account of the remote Causes and Events that prepar'd the Way to it for above twenty Years...

—Judasz Tadeusz Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 1740.

The centerpiece of social change in the "long" Safavid period from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries is the fall of the dynasty itself to a fairly small invading party of Afghan tribesmen at Isfahan in 1722, the event to which the Polish Jesuit Krusinski alludes in such perceptive terms above. The present chapter devotes itself in large measure to the "remote causes" that prepared this event, starting with an inventory of the types of social change that occurred in Iran from 1500 to 1722, including those both internal and external to the social formation and its constituent parts—tribal nomads, urban groups, peasants and the court. This puts us in a better position to evaluate the various theories that have been put forward to explain the dramatic fall of the dynasty, and to contribute to this debate by drawing attention to the role played by fiscal crisis tendencies on the one hand, and political and ideological problems of the Safavid state, on the other (the fiscal crisis, in particular, has never been properly identified and brought to bear). After this story has been told, we turn to a briefer examination of the successive tribal families that sought dominion in the course of an eighteenth century marked by fairly frequent changes of "dynasty"—the Afghans from 1722 to 1729, Nadir Shah and the Afshars from 1729 to 1746, Karim Khan Zand in Shiraz from 1750 to 1779, and finally the rise of the Qajars to a more permanent position of power after 1785. In each case the most salient political, economic and ideological developments of their rule will be

assessed. Finally, the chapter closes with a discussion of the significance of the Safavid period and the eighteenth century in terms of our main subjects of concern—social structure and social change in Iran in historical perspective. Our conclusion points to the negative developmental consequences of the fall of the Safavids and the centrality of the eighteenth-century tribal civil wars as a watershed separating the independent and dynamic political economy of the seventeenth century from the dependent and increasingly thwarted development of the nineteenth-century Qajar social formation, the subject of Part Two of this dissertation.

## **I. Types of Social Change under the Safavids, 1500 - 1722**

### **I.A. Internal Conflicts**

The following discussion of internal movements for social change will argue that two types of conflict can be discerned in Safavid Iran—1) social movements with a popular base, particularly urban-led uprisings but also involving tribal and peasant groups, and 2) inter- and intra-elite conflicts over political power, such as the sixteenth-century tribal civil wars, 'Abbas I's centralization effort, and the rise of the harem and ulama to influence over the later Safavid shahs. Popular social movements can be in part conceptualized as incipient class conflicts based on often fragile alliances among dominated groups, whereas elite struggles might be seen as "mode of production" or "sectoral" conflicts since these were waged at the top of the social structure between elites seeking control over the social surplus. The first part of our empirical discussion argues that the proto-class urban and peasant uprisings of the period failed because they could be contained within their modes of production and isolated in their geographical areas by a state which possessed overwhelming power vis-a-vis any single uprising. The second part of this section suggests that the shahs' hegemony over other elites derived from the structural factors identified in Chapter Two—control over the surplus of several modes of production and over economic, as well as ideological, political and military resources. Finally, it should be noted that many of the movements discussed spill over analytic

boundaries and involved elements of both popular and elite participation, or urban, peasant and tribal actors.

### **I.A.1. Popular Movements and Incipient Class Conflict**

We shall begin our inquiry with a look at several popular social movements of the Safavid period whose primary locus was in an urban setting. The guilds, for example, sometimes engaged in political protests and demonstrations in defence of their interests, particularly over issues of taxation, price controls and bureaucratic abuses. Mehdi Keyvani, drawing on Willem Floor's research on nineteenth-century Iran, attempts to reconstruct the course of a typical bazaar demonstration of the Safavid period, for example, over a tax grievance. First the elders would be sent to the governor, *divan-begi* (chief justice), or even the shah. If they were not satisfied by the response, they could close the bazaar (*ta'til-i bazar*)—i.e., a general strike. Though considered illegal by the government, it might be sanctioned by the ulama. Crowds would gather, composed of shopkeepers and other citizens mobilized willingly or otherwise. If threatened by the government, they might seek refuge in mosques or specified government buildings (such asylum, which the government was bound to respect, was known as *bast*). The ulama sometimes mediated a solution at this point, either in favor of the guilds, or perhaps in collusion with the government. Keyvani notes that "Reports of bazaar demonstrations or revolts from the Safavid period are few."<sup>1</sup> Yet the successful protest of the Yazd weavers against certain taxes in 1603 has already been noted, and Keyvani describes a closing of the Isfahan bazaar and *bast*-taking by the craft guildspeople in 1657 that led to the dismissal of an oppressive *darugha* (mayor) and the *divan-begi* who had failed to resolve the problems at stake in the early stages of the dispute.<sup>2</sup>

More wide-ranging in aim and complex in terms of participation were a series of sixteenth-century urban-based revolts. The events in eastern Khorasan of 1535-37 which Martin Dickson has

<sup>1</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 153, based on W. M. Floor, "The Guilds in Qājār Persia," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leiden (1971).

<sup>2</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 159, on Yazd, and 156-57 on Isfahan. Keyvani describes another *bast*, this time by the confectioners guild to protest royal purchases on credit, during the reign of Sultan Husayn (1694-1722): *ibid.*, 158.

termed the "Herat Revolution" had roots in the repeated extortions of the local population by qizilbash governors, especially when the city was under siege by the Uzbeks, but also even in peacetime.<sup>3</sup> In late 1535 a "mob" of the poor of Herat murdered the extortionate governor in the baths. Resistance to qizilbash control was led by landowners (*arbab*) and notables (*a'yan*) of the agricultural suburbs (*buluk*) around the city, who had been severely oppressed by the qizilbash. When a plot was discovered and all the *a'yan* of Herat proper were imprisoned, a "popular army" of suburb-based *bulukati* revolutionaries besieged the city and called on the Uzbek leader Ubayd Khan for help. Dickson has analyzed the social composition of the movement and its aims:

From the unsavory epithets applied in the sources to the *bulúkátí* movement—they are referred to, for example, as "rabble" (*ajládí*), "unknowns" (*majhúl*), "irresponsible freebooters" (*lavand*), "mischief makers" (*fuzúl*), "ignoramuses" (*juhhdíl*)—it is evident that the reference is to what we have been taught to label today as the "depressed classes" or "the proletariat". The nameless miller who advanced with sword in hand against the walls of Harát, the looting of the homes in Harát at its entry, the references to the *dahátí* and the *rústáyí* (the "villagers" or "peasants") in the movement, would indicate that an element of "class warfare" and jacquerie were involved.<sup>4</sup>

Both urban notables and their "ordinary" followers, who included city people and nearby villagers, had suffered from qizilbash military exactions to the point where they favored a change to Uzbek control. The rebels and their Uzbek allies besieged the city for five months until its gates were opened from inside by an *a'yan* commander. The besiegers then sacked Herat, carrying off wealth, raping women and setting the bazaar on fire. Their control of the city lasted six months, during which some five or six citizens would be executed each day for "heresy" (i.e. being Shi'i) but in fact, in Dickson's view, to get at their wealth. Herat was abandoned by the Uzbeks in early 1537, and a compromise joint *a'yan*-qizilbash interim government was set up until the Safavid army liberating Khorasan from the Uzbeks entered the city and a general amnesty was issued.

The second city of Iran, Tabriz, witnessed an extensive revolt between 1571 and 1573, whose main events were chronicled by Hasan Rumlu and summarized by Keyvani:

<sup>3</sup> My account of this rebellion follows Dickson, "Sháh Tahmásb and the Uzbeks," 302-364 *passim*; the events are also mentioned in Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 101-102.

<sup>4</sup> Dickson, "Sháh Tahmásb and the Uzbeks," 323.

The governor, Allāh-Qulī Bēg Ustājilū, who had been appointed by Shāh Tahmāsb I earlier in the year 979/1571, antagonized the people of Darjūya, one of the quarters of Tabrīz, by his brutal behaviour. Among these people were many artisans and shopkeepers. The infuriated people drew their swords and slew the magnates and nobles (*a'yān va ashraf*). Allāh Qulī Bēg Ustājilū was then dismissed from his post, and Yūsuf Bēg Shāmlū was appointed governor at the people's request. Yūsuf Bēg Shāmlū conciliated the malcontents through their elders (*kadkhudāyān*); but the accord was violated, and the struggle broke out again. Finally the army of the Shāh's central government marched on Tabrīz and recaptured the city. The leaders of the revolt were then massacred. It is noteworthy that, according to Hasan Rūmlū, craftsmen and tradesmen played the chief parts, the most prominent rebel leaders being Ḥusayn, a greengrocer, Ḥasan, a shoe maker, Nashmī, a fuller, and Shanjī, the son of a shawl-maker. All of them were executed 979/1571-981/1573. Although Rūmlū says nothing about the consequences of this uprising, it is known that soon after the end of the two years of contention between the government and the people of Tabrīz, Shāh Tahmāsb I gradually remitted the professional taxes on the guilds at Tabrīz and other cities.<sup>5</sup>

Though exhibiting some features of the bazaar demonstration, this uprising was clearly more serious in requiring state military intervention, and class-oriented in part (the slaying of "magnates and nobles" by artisans and shopkeepers).

Finally, a whole series of multi-sided movements erupted on the Safavid/Uzbek border at Astarabad during the sixteenth century. The first of these, in 1537, was proclaimed by Muhammad Saleh Bitikchi (or Tabakchi), a former local official known as a carouser and libertine. He gained popular support not only among urban artisans but also from the exploited peasantry and tribal groups of the area, and was seen as a rallying point by local middle-level officials who felt threatened by Safavid and qizilbash control. Supporters of the movement were known as the *siyah pushan* ("those who wear black," after their long black robes). Reid writes:

The only well-defined doctrine that existed within the movement itself promised a deliverance from the demonic hosts of qizilbāsh and Ūzbek warriors who robbed the border peoples of their livelihoods and stole their children and slaves away.<sup>6</sup>

This millenarian and egalitarian message attracted a popular base of poor tribespeople and peasants which was nevertheless firmly under the control on non-qizilbash urban mercantile families. Muhammad Saleh at first succeeded in driving the Ustajlu governor out of Astarabad but the tribal authorities retook the city during the celebration of Muharram and Muhammad Saleh himself was hung as a

<sup>5</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 155. Hasan Rumlu's chronicle is the *Ahsan al-tavarikh*, edited and translated by Charles Norman Seddon, *A Chronicle of the early Safawis*, in two volumes: I (Persian text), II (translation) (Baroda: Gackwad's Oriental Series, 1931, 1934).

<sup>6</sup> Reid, "Rebellion and Social Change in Astarābād," 38.

rebel in Tabriz around 1538.<sup>7</sup> In the 1550s local Turcoman tribes revolted under a chieftain named Uba, but the Persian population of Astarabad (the *siyah pushan* social base) refused to support them, eventually executing Uba in 1559.<sup>8</sup> The *siyah pushan* were active again from 1576 to 1600, when a local, non-qizilbash Astarabadi government was set up, which again mobilized some lower class groups to advance the careers of local leaders. By 1600 the royal army had ended the revolt, with tribes and local people submitting their problems to Shah 'Abbas and returning to their tasks.<sup>9</sup> The rebellions in Astarabad are an instance of a multi-faceted popular movement including artisans, peasants and tribespeople, inspired by a secret egalitarian ideology, and led by elites who too frequently capitulated or changed course once in power.

This brings us to the question of peasant and tribal participation in popular social movements. Tribal warriors certainly took part in the civil wars of the sixteenth (and eighteenth) century, but these were struggles among elites for control of resources and will be studied in the next section. Another form of elite conflict which they supported were *qazaq* rebellions—local, tribal-based independence movements—and these too will be considered later. Our question here is did ordinary tribespeople participate in popular social movements with goals and organizations of their own? Certainly, as was seen in Chapter One, folk epics of the time reveal the latent hostility felt by pastoralists for the qizilbash tribal elites which controlled them from above. And we have just seen the involvement of some tribal groups in the uprisings centered at Astarabad, alongside peasants and urban artisans in the *siyah pushan*. But one senses, in the absence of more evidence to the contrary, that such alliances of oppressed groups *across* modes of production were difficult to effect and sustain in Safavid Iran, and rarely occurred. Of all the dominated classes in the Iranian social formation, tribespeople were bound most closely to their leading chiefly families, and thus are most often to be found supporting them in their political struggles at the top of the social structure against the

<sup>7</sup> Dickson, "Shāh Tahmāsb and the Uzbeks," 381-84.

<sup>8</sup> Reid, "Rebellion and Social Change in Astarābād," 41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46. Monshi describes the "putting in order" of Astarabad in 1598-99: *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 765-72.

Safavid state and each other where the goal was to maintain or increase their share of the overall surplus product.

Peasant involvement in popular social movements was more extensive, or at least better documented, than that of tribespeople. Reid has argued that "The peasants of Iran in the Safavid period were the furthest thing possible from a "nonrevolutionary" peasantry. The record of rebellion as found in the various chronicles of the Safavid period is immense."<sup>10</sup> Analogous to the guild demonstrations and protests in the urban sector were the peasant demonstrations described by Char-din in Chapter Two to register complaints about local governors or petition for tax relief due to crop failure. Recall also the phenomena of flight as a kind of protest, and general peasant distrust of bureaucrats, especially in outlying areas (this they shared in common with tribespeople). We have seen peasants supporting urban revolts at both Herat and Astarabad; Reid feels that peasant movements may have often involved secret associations like the *siyah pushan*, with apocalyptic, egalitarian overtones:

Very little is known about the visions of apocalyptic messages proclaimed by these groups in Astarābād, though they must have preached against the heavy tax burdens imposed by the state and against the local notables of various types, including the many rebels from the other two [i.e. tribal and urban] categories.<sup>11</sup>

The peasants of Gilan in the densely-settled silk, tea and rice-growing region between the Elburz mountains and Caspian sea in particular harbored a long tradition of rebelliousness. Bausani mentions "a serious revolt of dissatisfied peasants in Gīlān" from 1568 to 1570.<sup>12</sup> Monshi's chronicle records a revolt in Gilan from 1593 to 1595, and articulates the court's rather dim view of the people of that province:

As everyone knows the people of Gīlān are dim-witted, ignorant, and improvident. They are treacherous and disloyal by nature, and are totally lacking in generosity and magnanimity. The common people are seditious to such a degree that, even when they are ruled by an independent sultan, some farmer's son has only to take to the forests in revolt for

<sup>10</sup> Reid, "Rebellion and Social Change in Astarābād," 52 note 8. The allusion is to Farhad Kazemi and Ervand Abrahamian, "The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry of Modern Iran," pp. 259-304 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XI (1978).

<sup>11</sup> Reid, "Rebellion and Social Change in Astarābād," 36.

<sup>12</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 143.

everyone to flock to his standard. On the first day, an enormous group gathers round him, but, on the very same day, either because there is some simple matter to be attended to, or because they hear a rumor from some ignorant fellow who does not even know what he is supposed to be doing himself, they disperse and pay the penalty for their folly. The next day, they are capable of repeating the whole performance.... For the sake of being king for a day, they are ready to destroy themselves.... There are innumerable instances of this sort of behavior in the history of Gilān—perhaps it is something to do with the climate! Every few days some governor aspires to be an independent ruler; if he succeeds in slaying the local chiefs by treachery, the flames of rebellion sweep the province from end to end. Prudence dictates that one should avoid having dealings with such a people.<sup>13</sup>

In April 1629 a serious uprising broke out when a group of local Iranian ruling families led by a certain Kalanjar Sultan revolted against qizilbash control.<sup>14</sup> These notables played on discontent due to excessive taxes to mobilize some 30,000 poor and common people "without name or position," and defeated those officials who remained loyal to the shah, gaining control of the whole province. In Rasht the rebels seized royal warehouses containing 200 loads (59,000 kilograms) of raw silk that had been collected as taxes; these were distributed among the people. The notables however asked Kalanjar Sultan to protect these warehouses. At Rasht and Lahijan goods in the royal warehouses belonging to local and European merchants were seized, while at Fuman the rebels had to be restrained by Kalanjar Sultan from burning down the houses of the kalantar and other notables. Meanwhile the government appointed Saru Khan to raise a tribal army with the support of loyal Gilani notables. The rebel army, its plans betrayed, was severely defeated in the summer of 1629. The victors enslaved women and killed rebel prisoners, including Kalanjar Sultan. Some groups took to the forests and continued a guerrilla-type war until the government ordered all prisoners and captives to be returned to their houses. Some 300,000 tumans' worth of goods belonging to the state and local merchants had been lost. Though the rebellion was crushed, it would appear that it played a role in Shah Safi's cancellation of the royal silk monopoly which followed within the year.<sup>15</sup> If this is so, then it can be argued that the rising of Gilani peasants and local elites in 1629 had rather

<sup>13</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 668.

<sup>14</sup> This account is based on N. V. Pigulevskaya, A. V. Yakubovsky, I. P. Petrushevsky, A. M. Belenitsky, and L. V. Stoeva, *Tarikh-i Iran az Dauran-i Bastan ta Payan-i Sadeh-i Hijdahumin-i Miladi* [History of Iran from Ancient Times till the End of the Eighteenth Century], translated from Russian to Persian by Karim Kishavarz (Tehran: Payam Press, 1354/1975), 554-56.

<sup>15</sup> This connection is apparently suggested by 'Abd al-Fattah Fumani Gilani, *Tarikh-i Gilan, dar vaqai'-i salha-yi 923-1038* [History of Gilan, from ca. 1517 to 1630], edited by M. Sutudch (Tehran: Intisharat-i Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran, 1349/1970), which according to Keyvani, "contains a very clear account of the Gilānī resistance against the silk monopoly established by 'Abbās I and afterwards revoked by Shāh Safi": *Artisans and Guild Life*, 8.

far-reaching consequences, insofar as it contributed to the weakening of the Safavid state's economic power and exacerbated fiscal crisis tendencies set in motion later in the seventeenth century.

A final group of popular social movements had religious underpinnings of various kinds. In 1577, after the brief reign and death of Shah Isma'il II, several darvishes appeared claiming to be a "resurrected" Isma'il. This happened in Sabzavar, then Hamadan, and finally Kuh Giluyeh, where a man assembled 10,000 supporters:

He became known as Shāh-e Qalandar and also as Shāh Ismā'īl-e Qatīl, captured territory bordering on Dizfūl and Shūshtar, struck coins in his name, and ruled "with utmost ease and felicity" for some years until he was captured and decapitated in 1582/990. His head was sent to the capital on a spear and his territory recaptured.<sup>16</sup>

Other rebellions were more explicitly mahdistic: in 1620 a Sayyid Muhammad rose in Gilan claiming descent from Shaykh Safi and calling himself the "Messenger of the Lord of the Age";<sup>17</sup>

Monshi attests to the appeal of the "deceitful seyyeds of Gīlān":

Although all men are inclined to listen to the evil promptings of Satan and to fill their heads with perverse ideas, the people of Gīlān are more prone to this sort of thing than most men; they are always ready to lend their support to unlawful and dangerous enterprises without giving a thought to the outcome of their action.<sup>18</sup>

The outcome of this action was military repression and death, a fate which also befell a darvish Reza in 1631 who gained adherents among the Zanganah tribe with claims to mahdihood or deputyship to the Lord of the Age.<sup>19</sup> Chardin describes the popularity of a certain Mulla Kazem during the reign of 'Abbas II (1642-66), much revered as "a prophet" and "a saint," who used to preach in his hermitage outside Isfahan, "attracting an infinity of people to his sermons, the great and small, all

Shah Safi himself put the matter thus in a letter to King Charles I in 1634:

... in my grandfather [Shah 'Abbas]'s tyme he made Crooke that no man could buy any [silk] but himselfe and of himselfe ... but since my tyme I have broken that Crooke, that Middlemen in my country might reape the benefitt thereof: and that those who are the owners of the silke might sell itt to whom they would.

Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 46, citing *Public Records Office*, S.P. 102: 40, pt. 1, fo. 190.

Ferrier comments: "Yet, the Shah having opened up the silk trade was unable to close it again, a situation from which the local officials in the silk-growing provinces and the Armenian merchants gained most advantage": *ibid.*, 47. Thus, after 1630, the shahs and the East India companies lost some portion of the silk market to the Armenian "middlemen," to local rulers in Gilan, Mazandaran and Shirvan, and, presumably, to owners of mulberry trees.

<sup>16</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 197. See also Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 401-406.

<sup>17</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 197.

<sup>18</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 1174.

<sup>19</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 197.

hurried there,' including the *divan-begi*:

*This man thundered (s'emportait) in public against the government. He would say that the king and his court were abominators, breakers of the law; that God wished the annihilation of this damned branch, and the establishment of another pure branch of imams.*<sup>20</sup>

After six months of such fiery preaching, Mulla Kazem was banished to Shiraz, and apparently killed en route. Chardin says that none of his followers were persecuted.

To conclude this discussion of popular social movements in Safavid Iran we may note both the numerousness of rebellions of several kinds, especially in the period from the 1520s to the 1630s, and the fact that virtually all of them failed to achieve significant gains for the majority of the population. Reasons for failure included in some cases the difficulty of uniting oppressed groups, especially across mode of production lines; internal divisions and conflicts of interest also arose, such as the disputes in Gilan in 1629 over whether to protect or distribute merchants' goods that were seized. When disadvantaged groups did somehow manage to make contact, such as the peasants and townspeople of Herat in 1535, or the peasants, artisans and tribespeople in the siyah pushan movements in Astarabad, a strong tendency can be discerned for their leaders to compromise and be coopted once in power.<sup>21</sup> Where this failed to occur, provincial or central authorities stepped in to crush real resistance either easily or with some difficulty, an almost inevitable outcome given the primarily local character of the rebellions that took place. Reid's pessimistic conclusion about social movements in Astarabad is that "The only effect the rebellions had was to make the lot of the peasants and urban laborers harsher and more unbearable."<sup>22</sup> While this is true especially for the sixteenth century, when qizilbash governors often imposed heavy taxes on the population and warfare was endemic in the life of each generation, the more centralized absolutism of Shah 'Abbas after 1600 and the long period of external peace after the Treaty of Zuhab with the Ottoman Empire in 1639 found an internal reflection in a far more quiescent seventeenth century, about which Krusinski

<sup>20</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 217-18; VII, 444-45.

<sup>21</sup> The rather similar dynamics of middle class leaders during European urban social movements of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries have been perceptively analyzed in political, economic and psychological terms by the German critical theorist Max Horkheimer in "Egoism and the Freedom Movement," pp. 11-60 in *Telos*, number 54 (Winter 1982-83).

<sup>22</sup> Reid, "Rebellion and Social Change in Astarābād," 51.

could write with only some exaggeration, that "there was not one Town that discovered so much as a Thought of revolting."<sup>23</sup> The reasons for this have much to do with developments in the sphere of a second category of social change.

#### **I.A.2. Elite Conflict and Sectoral Struggles**

Struggles for power at the top of the social structure were common throughout the Safavid period. One way to conceptualize these changes is in terms of the degree of centralization/decentralization of the Safavid state, the key to which was the shah's relation to the qizilbash tribes. In Chapter Two we saw how the leading tribal chiefs challenged royal authority, first after Isma'il's death in 1524 and again after Tahmasp died in 1576. Shah 'Abbas spent almost the first ten years of his reign restoring internal order. This he accomplished by systematically reducing tribal power, building up a new state-paid standing army and bringing in Georgian captives and more native Iranians as provincial governors and court bureaucrats.

The form and degree of resistance of tribal chiefs to royal authority gradually changed as the balance of power shifted; Banani highlights the different contexts of the tribal "civil wars" of 1526-33 and 1576-90:

An estimate of Tahmasp I's measure of success in reducing the actual power of Turco-man tribes and in increasing autocratic power, may be gained by comparing the Qizilbāsh disorders at the beginning and at the end of his reign. Whereas in the beginning the Qizilbāsh *amīrs* were fighting as independent chiefs for prospects of greater autonomy, at the end they were squabbling as partisans of rival aspirants of the *dūdman* [Safavid royal family] to the throne, in expectation of relative royal favors.<sup>24</sup>

Local tribal groups also engaged in a type of independence movement known as *qazaq* rebellions which often occurred on the periphery of the Safavid empire, in Georgia and the Caucasus, Kurdistan, Khuzistan, Khorasan and Sistan/Baluchistan.<sup>25</sup> The numerousness of such uprisings is evident from Monshi's chronicle entry for 1571/72:

<sup>23</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 94.

<sup>24</sup> Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 92.

<sup>25</sup> Reid, "Rebellion and Social Change in Astarābād," 36, 38.

Other positive achievements of the Shah in regard to the salvation of the country include the chastisement of rebels in various outlying districts—in Kurdestān, Larestān, Tāleš, and Rostamdār. If I were to describe all the local rebellions which were suppressed by officers of the Safavid state, I would become prolix.<sup>26</sup>

This underlines the salient fact that despite the frequency of attempted rebellions, all were successfully suppressed by the state, sooner or later. By 1600, "The lines of uymāq authority had been totally disrupted by internal rebellion, civil war, and the policies of 'Abbas I, leaving a truncated, almost totally disabled uymāq structure."<sup>27</sup> The great amirs declined in wealth, territory and military manpower, and their ambitions shrank from political control of provincial governorships to a desperate attempt to hold onto their social bases in the local pastoral units. 'Abbas's reform measures sealed the fate of the sixteenth-century *uymaq*/tribal state system and heralded a new Safavid absolutism that lasted well into the seventeenth century. Table 3.1 offers a periodization of this process in the Safavid period.

Table 3.1  
Central vs. Decentralized State Power in Iran, 1500-1800

Strong Central Control/ Absolutism	Decentralized Power Tribal State
1500-1524/6	1526-1533
1530s-1576	1576-1590s
1600-1690s	Eighteenth Century

'Abbas's absolutist project endured for several generations after his death in 1629, until a constellation of factors led to a decline in Safavid hegemony by the early eighteenth century, to be examined in subsequent sections.

One of the key elements in the centralization process of the seventeenth century was the conversion of state provinces (*mamalik*) administered by qizilbash chieftains who retained the bulk of the tax revenues generated in exchange for providing the shah with a contingent of troops on demand, into crown provinces (*khassa*) administered directly by an official of the central

<sup>26</sup> Monshi, *History of Shah 'Abbas*, 188.

<sup>27</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 119.

bureaucracy. This reduced qizilbash power in two important ways—economic and military, and thus as viable *political* rivals of the state as well. This policy was urged upon Shah 'Abbas's successor, Safi, by his grand Vazir Saru Taqi, who argued that "since there were no wars to wage, nor plans to undertake any, he could do without having the goods of his empire consumed by the governors."<sup>28</sup> The wealthy central province of Fars with its capital at Shiraz was the first area converted to crown land; Olearius counted as crown territory in the 1630s the cities of Qazvin, Isfahan, Kashan, Tehran, Mashhad, Kirman, Hormuz and parts of Georgia.<sup>29</sup> During the reign of 'Abbas II from 1642 to 1666 the khassa holdings were extended to Gilan and Mazandaran, Yazd, some parts of Khorasan and Azerbaijan (all according to Chardin), and to the Bakhtiari territory, Hamadan and Ardabil (according to Roemer).<sup>30</sup> Tribal governors were reinstated only if military threats arose, as in 1668-69 when Cossacks raided Gilan and Mazandaran from across the Caspian and Uzbek and Ottoman threats to Khorasan and Azerbaijan were taken seriously as well.<sup>31</sup> Kaempfer's list of the khassa in 1684 included the provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, Yazd and "Isfahan," and the towns of Qazvin, Kashan, Qom, Lar and Shiraz.<sup>32</sup> The number of court-appointed ghulams (mainly Georgians) serving as provincial administrators rose from 8 out of 14 "important" provinces in 1629 to 23 to 25 out of 37 newly-appointed governor-generals in the reign of 'Abbas II from 1642 to 1666.<sup>33</sup>

The traveller Chardin suggested that the consequences of converting state to crown lands were quite negative for the Iranian people, the economy and the state's military preparedness:

<sup>28</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 251.

<sup>29</sup> Olearius is cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 26 note 4. Roemer adds the town of Lar to the list: H. R. Roemer, "The Safavid Period," pp. 189-350 in Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, editors, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, volume 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 295.

<sup>30</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 251-52; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 295. Minorsky notes that "[Chardin's] list has no claim to accuracy," questioning in particular the inclusion of key border provinces like Khorasan and Azerbaijan (hence I suggest "parts" of these may have become khassa, as for example, the city of Mashhad in Khorasan, already listed in Safi's day): *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 252.

<sup>32</sup> Engelbert Kaempfer, *Dar darbar-e shahanshah-e Iran* [At the Court of the Shah of Iran], Persian translation (Tehran, 1971), no page, cited by Daryoush Navidi, "Socio-Economic and Political Changes in Safavid Iran 16th and 17th Centuries," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Vanderbilt University (1977), 127.

<sup>33</sup> Klaus-Michael Rohrborn, *Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1966), 33. In between, however, in 1642, the proportion had declined to 3 out of 11 "important" provinces: *ibid.*

The Persians find this a very bad policy, saying that the intendants are insatiable blood-suckers, who drain the subjects to fill up the royal treasury, and in so doing neglect the people's complaints about this oppression, pretending that the king's interest does not permit them to heed them as they would like, while in reality they plunder to enrich themselves; whereas the governors, looking on the province as a kingdom belonging to themselves, consume there what they raise, supporting many officials and a numerous court. The Persians also say that the new practice weakens the empire because it prevents the raising of good soldiers, and that there are no longer so many great lords supported from among whom to find in case of need brave leaders well-versed in military discipline; which exposes the kingdom to easy invasion by its enemies while the governors had been its defense and strength. Finally, they say that the new practice also impoverishes the kingdom because it brings money to the king's coffers which should circulate throughout the country; which is the same as if one had buried it in the earth...<sup>34</sup>

Chardin felt that the abuses of provincial governors were less grave than the royal administrators', since the former needed their provinces to flourish in order to live off them and had no incentive to constantly raise taxes in order to remain in place, while the royal comptrollers on the contrary had to "buy" their appointments, then increase revenues to keep them, and this led to corruption on their part and exploitation of the taxable population.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation has found favor with modern historians, including Minorsky, Lambton, Lockhart and most recently, Savory, who claims that the conversion policy "contributed largely to Safavid decline."<sup>36</sup>

The standard accounts are perhaps correct in this judgment, but the economic, political, military and social implications of the process need to be specified more clearly. The most concrete evidence of the damage is the case of Shiraz, which Chardin considers to have somehow lost more than 80,000 people, more than one-half its population, since it was made a crown territory by Shah Safi.<sup>37</sup> But Chardin also acknowledges that the shah's revenues in Shiraz and the surrounding province of Fars increased by eight million livres due to the change.<sup>38</sup> What is certain is that the tribal amirs who used to serve as provincial governors were losing politically and economically to the Safavid state. This would however disclose its negative side when no provincial army rallied to the Safavids

<sup>34</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 252-53.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 276-79. Krusinski confirms that by the reign of Sulayman, beginning in 1666, offices were bought and sold, and that considerable extortion ensued in the provinces: *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 84, 85, 100, 104.

<sup>36</sup> R. M. Savory, "The Safavid Administrative System," pp. 351-372 in Jackson and Lockhart, editors, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, volume 6, 367; Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 25-26; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 105-109; and Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavi Dynasty*, 23-24.

<sup>37</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 253-54; VIII, 446. Shiraz's problems may have had other causes—see the account of sudden price rises (caused by crop failures?) in 1678, and continued rains destroying buildings and ruining the populace in 1688, followed by an epidemic in which "thousands died in a day" (with no mention of the administrative changes) in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 445.

during the siege of Isfahan in 1722. The impact on more ordinary people is harder to assess, but some partial objections to the standard interpretation should be raised: 1) why did the new-style administrators not need to maintain as flourishing an economy to keep up revenue levels as the old-style governors? (the standard reply would be their short term in office and need to enrich themselves and satisfy the shah, but we saw in Chapter Two that the governors were not in fact permanent or secure in their tenure either); and 2) the fact that little surplus was remitted to the center under the old system does not mean that this greatly benefitted ordinary people who had to provide this surplus for the governors (the reply would be that the money remained in the province and was spent on patronage projects that supported a segment of the provincial court—its artists, poets, scholars and builders—but isn't this just a form of "trickle-down economics" as far as the majority are concerned?) Exploitation does seem to have increased in the later seventeenth century, but this appears to have been due more to other fiscal crisis tendencies than to the conversion from state to crown lands *per se*.

Did the conversion process affect land tenure relations in other ways? The available evidence is too scanty to be certain, let alone quantified, but various inferences have been attempted. As observed in the last chapter, the Safavids probably ran through the usual cycle of central control and reshuffling of agrarian power, followed by gradual encroachments of private owners on the royal holdings. Banani and Lambton noted tendencies for members of the ulama to gain control over land as the seventeenth century wore on.<sup>39</sup> Chardin claimed that tiyul-holders (of whom the largest were the provincial governors) considered their assignments as their own private property.<sup>40</sup> Though Bert Fragner hypothesizes that there may not have been "any large-scale weakening of the great landholders," the expansion of crown land from the 1590s to the 1660s must have had an effect in this direction.<sup>41</sup> Control over some of the crown lands claimed by the shahs does seem to have passed

<sup>38</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 251.

<sup>39</sup> Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 96; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 113, 126.

<sup>40</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 418-20.

<sup>41</sup> Bert Fragner, "Social and Internal Economic Affairs," pp. 491-567 in Jackson and Lockhart, editors, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, volume 6, 516. As to the small-holders, he feels "... small-scale mulk land cultivated by the mālīk himself ... was very much on the decline": *ibid.*, 517.

through them to office-holders, government troops and others; thus Lambton writes, "As the central government weakened in the later Šafavid period the gradual tendency was for both *tuyūl* and *soyūrghāl* to be usurped and converted into private property over which the officials of the state exercised little or no control."<sup>42</sup> A most interesting argument is put forward by Daryoush Navidi, who sees privatization tendencies in the evolution of crown land, vaqf endowments, *suyurghal* grants and reclamation of dead lands, all of which put the peasantry more directly in contact with the holders of the rights to the agrarian surplus. Navidi interprets this not as private property in itself, but as a significant transitional development shifting the status of the peasant from a "communal man" to a "man subordinated to a privileged man who had acquired the right to possess the revenue from the lands." In the *post*-Safavid era this would lead to a further breakdown of the communal village and lay the basis for private owners and landlords. Rather than the governors or bureaucrats, it was "less autonomous and less powerful people, mainly city dwellers, who were highly controlled by the central government, [who] were to become the land owners."<sup>43</sup> We shall try to follow this process into the nineteenth century in Chapter Four.

The key institution of the army, too, underwent changes in the later seventeenth century which can be in part attributed to the mamalik-khassa conversion project. It will be recalled that Shah 'Abbas's reforms of ca. 1600 included bringing in peasants, Iranian tribesmen and slave convert (ghulam) soldiers all paid by the state, as a counterbalance to the old provincial qizilbash tribal levies. When new areas were incorporated into the crown lands this further reduced the tribal component in the Safavid armies; moreover, the centrally-paid army did not always increase correspondingly to keep pace.<sup>44</sup> The total numbers in the army were constantly diminished under Shah Safi in the 1630s, and only partly restored under 'Abbas II, who retook Qandahar from the Mughals in 1648.<sup>45</sup> Many of the troops existed only on paper: "During a review held in 1660 'Abbas II discovered that the same arms, horses and men passed before him 10-12 times."<sup>46</sup> By the 1670s the

<sup>42</sup> Lambton, "The Evolution of the *Iqtā'*," 49. See also Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 380, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 147.

<sup>43</sup> Navidi, "Socio-Economic and Political Changes in Safavid Iran," 150, 160-62.

<sup>44</sup> Savory, "The Safavid Administrative System," 367.

<sup>45</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 315; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 290-91.

troops lived at home, and rarely, if ever, drilled together, merely showing up each six months or year to be inspected. After Chardin left Iran in 1677 he felt the situation had deteriorated even further: pay had fallen by a quarter, and as expenses rose, many soldiers were deserting the army for other jobs and failing to bring up their children as soldiers. Chardin noted that the court tolerated the diminution of the army, seeing it as a savings.<sup>47</sup> The decline in numbers, pay and training, the corruption and neglect in high places, the long peace with the Ottomans—all these combined to seriously erode the morale and preparedness of the army. As Roemer notes, “it was eventually said of the army that it was quite useful for military parades but no use at all for war.”<sup>48</sup> This deterioration would begin to be felt after about 1700 as border revolts took place, and culminated in 1722 as we shall see below.

Shifting to the plane of intra-elite conflicts within the Safavid court itself, two basic developments must be mentioned. The first of these is the rise to power of the harem as a political weight in the Safavid state, particularly the most important eunuchs and the shah's mother and most forceful wives or mistresses. This came about in consequence of a significant change in the upbringing of the royal princes inaugurated by Shah 'Abbas. Rather than continuing the practice of appointing the young princes to provincial governorships with a tribal tutor acting as guardian, 'Abbas, fearing qizilbash intrigues, began the practice of confining the princes to the harem, where they learned little of statecraft or military science.<sup>49</sup> Brought up in isolation from the world, the eldest son was not told he was heir-apparent; he learned (sometimes) to read, to pray, to shoot a bow, and little else, and came under the influence of the eunuchs and women of the harem.<sup>50</sup> The result of this upbringing seems to have been a marked decline or “degeneration” in the personal capacities of the Safavid rulers who followed 'Abbas I. Krusinski writes of Shah Safi who ruled from 1629 to 1642:

<sup>46</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 35, based on Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 315, 323. Roemer says this review occurred in 1666: “The Safavid Period,” 291.

<sup>47</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 317, 325-26. Lambton adds that many of the soldiers pawned their weapons: A. K. S. Lambton, “The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century,” pp. 108-129 in Naff and Owen, editors, *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, 115.

<sup>48</sup> Roemer, “The Safavid Period,” 291.

<sup>49</sup> See Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 94-95, and “Safavid Persia,” 424.

<sup>50</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 246-47; VI, 30.

He meddled very little with Affairs of the Government, passing his whole Life with his Bottle, his Wives, or in Hunting, so that had it not been for the numerous Cruelties, which stained his Reign with Blood, it would have been scarce perceivable that he ever was King.<sup>51</sup>

'Abbas II, who ruled from 1642 to 1666, was only about nine years old when he took the throne; less influenced by the harem, he had a better reputation for active leadership in the political and military fields, but he too drank and could be ruthless with members of the court, and during the last years of his reign he governed "irregularly," probably ill with syphilis.<sup>52</sup> The last two Safavids, Sulayman (ruled 1666-1694) and Sultan Husayn (ruled 1694-1722), exhibited few redeeming features. Sulayman drank heavily, abused his officials (and had some executed) and is said to have once spent seven years in the harem without emerging.<sup>53</sup> Several European travellers concur as to the overindulgences, neglect of duty and extraordinary incompetence of Sultan Husayn.<sup>54</sup>

Corresponding to the personal degeneration of these later Safavid shahs was a rise in the status and power of the harem environment that produced them. A private "harem council" consisting of the most important eunuchs formed in Sulayman's reign, and under Sultan Husayn, they became "the Arbiters of Affairs, the Dispensers of Employments and Favors, and Absolute Masters of the Government," deciding issues of war and peace, conducting foreign relations, and making appointments to all offices.<sup>55</sup> The titular ministers of the council of state (the *divan*) and the court assembly devolved

<sup>51</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 47. The cruelties referred to include the elimination of rival family members and some leading court officials. Roemer notes that he was not literate: "The Safavid Period," 280-81.

<sup>52</sup> On his popularity and qualities, see Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 51-52, and Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present Time: Containing an Account of the Religion, Government, Usages and Character of the Inhabitants of that Kingdom* (London: John Murray, 1815), volume 1, 582-83, cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 28. On his illness and death, as well as his reforms, Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 301, 303.

Father Francis of Shiraz noted in 1660 that "the king is so much intent on sensuality that he does not think anything about his kingdom," and it is speculated that 'Abbas II died of an inflammation of the throat caused by excessive drinking: *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 404.

<sup>53</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 31, citing Muhammad Muhsin, *Zubdat al-Tawarikh*. Fryer writes, "... when he began to hearken to Flatterers, and give himself to Idleness, he left off to Govern, and listed himself in the service of Cruelty, Drunkenness, Gluttony, Lasciviousness, and abominable Extortion": *A New Account of East India and Persia*, volume III, 51, cited by Lockhart, "European Contacts with Persia, 1350-1736," pp. 373-409 in Jackson and Lockhart, editors, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, volume 6, 403. Roemer cites Kaempfer to attest to a few good qualities: "occasional acts of justice and clemency, piety, an unusual love of peace and winning social manners": "The Safavid Period," 305.

<sup>54</sup> Among these are the Dutch artist Cornelius Le Brun in 1704, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al mulūk*, 24; the Capuchin Père Bernard de Bourges in 1713, cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 114; and finally, the Russian envoy, A. P. Volinsky, who observed circa 1718: "The present head is such that instead of being above his subjects, he is his own subjects' subject; I believe that seldom can one find such a fool among commoners, to say nothing of crowned heads": cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 24.

<sup>55</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 83; also 76-84.

into "mere executive organs of this privy council.... Sovereignty resided in the harem, where eunuchs, princesses and concubines intrigued incessantly."<sup>56</sup> Harem infighting and provincial bureaucratic abuses were linked, as alliances formed and positions were bought and sold, with intra-elite rivalries at court leading to frequent changes in both military and provincial appointments.<sup>57</sup>

Another elite which attained a new degree of power at the shah's expense in the latter stages of the seventeenth century were the highest-ranking ulama. In Chapter Two we saw the increasing challenges of the ulama to royal legitimacy over the issue of who represented the Hidden Imam; the Safavids seem to have been put onto the defensive in this controversy after 1650.<sup>58</sup> But there was not just a struggle to evolve a power base independent of the state;<sup>59</sup> the ulama also achieved notable successes in directly controlling the last two shahs from 1666 to 1722.<sup>60</sup> This attempt to influence the government *from within* intensified with the appointment of the eminent *mujtahid* Muhammad Baqir Majlisi as *shaykh al-islam* of Isfahan in 1687. Until his death in 1699, Majlisi exercised much influence over Shah Sultan Husayn in such policies as prohibition of drinking (for a time only), banishment of Sufis and large-scale conversions and persecutions of minorities. The office of *mullabashi* (supervisor of the ulama and sayyids) was created for him, and later passed to his grandson Muhammad Husayn, who together with the *hakimbashi* (chief physician) was the most dominant minister in the cabinet up to the fall of the dynasty.<sup>61</sup> One of Majlisi's most historically consequential actions was the initiation of campaigns of persecution against not only the non-Muslim religious minorities, but against Sufis, "philosophers" and Sunnis:

<sup>56</sup> Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 307. Father Sanson noted the power of the eunuchs under Shah Solayman: Père N. Sanson, *Voyage ou Relation de l'Etat présent du Royaume de la Perse* (Paris, 1695), n.p., cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty*, 29-30. Chardin comments in a similar vein, writing circa 1700: *Voyages*, V, 240.

<sup>57</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 98-100; Leonard Michael Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Maryland (1973), 61-67.

<sup>58</sup> See, among others, Jean Aubin, "La politique religieuse des safavides," pp. 235-244 in *Le Shi'isme Imâmite*, Colloque de Strasbourg (6-9 mai 1968) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), 240.

<sup>59</sup> This is the thrust of Arjomand's argument at certain key points: *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 122, 211. See also Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 234.

<sup>60</sup> Banani, "Reflections on The Social and Economic Structure of Safavid Persia," 86-87.

<sup>61</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 24; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty*, 119-122.

Far from unifying the population of the country, this policy of intolerance, which was also pursued by Muḥammad Bāqir's grandson and successor Mīr Muḥammad Ḥusayn, tended to sow dissension because it encouraged people to denounce one another. It was one of the factors that subsequently, in the hour of need, rendered religious commitment ineffective as a stimulus to popular resolve to defend the country.<sup>62</sup>

Not only would support from areas with substantial Sunni populations—the Caucasus, Kurdistan and Khorasan<sup>63</sup>—not be forthcoming at the siege of Isfahan, we shall see that the Afghan invaders, who were Sunnis themselves, had religious grievances stemming from these persecution campaigns.

To sum up this long section on internal social movements and elite conflicts, despite the numerousness of the popular movements that occurred, particularly in the sixteenth century, all were unsuccessful in altering the basic terms of power. Instead, under Shah 'Abbas, an absolutist state had triumphed by 1630, but one which required a strong, independent, active shah to direct the bureaucracy, conduct foreign relations, command the army, enforce justice and foster trade.<sup>64</sup> The crown land conversion project and the immuring of the royal princes in the harem revealed their limitations in the next generations, allowing a several-sided and fractious struggle for influence to arise among the ulama, led by Majlisi, the harem, itself internally divided, and an excluded, discontented old-line qizilbash tribal and Iranian bureaucratic court and provincial administration. More than the popular mass-based social movements, these inter- and intra-elite conflicts at the top of the social formation gradually undermined the absolutist Safavid state by the turn of the eighteenth century.

<sup>62</sup> Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 313. On the situation of the Jews and Armenian Christians, see Gregorian, "Minorities of Isfahan," 671, and Fragner, "Social and Economic Affairs," 548-49. On the Zoroastrians, see Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 73. On the Hindu moneylenders and merchants at Isfahan, see Hamid Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 288-302 in Naff and Owen, editors, *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, 290, and Ronald Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," pp. 412-490 in Jackson and Lockhart, editors, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, volume 6, 486, who considers that "in general Safavid Persia was more tolerant of its minorities than Mughal India and interfered with them less." On the Sufis, see Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 238.

For Majlisi's life and works, see Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 289-90; Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 152-55; and Lambton, *State and Government*, 226, 236-38, 283-85.

<sup>63</sup> Aubin, "Les Sunnites du Lārestān," 151.

<sup>64</sup> This formulation on 'Abbas's "system" is found in Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 59.

## **I.B. External Relations of Iran, 1630-1722**

Another form which development and social change took in Safavid Iran derived from external relations with Europe (especially Holland and England) and the neighboring Russian, Ottoman and Mughal empires. In Chapter Two, Iran was characterized from 1500 to 1630 as part of the external arena of the emerging capitalist world-economy, engaged in roughly egalitarian patterns of trade with the European core countries that centered on luxury items such as silk rather than large-scale bulk commodities. In this section, attention will be paid to the evolution of these relations after 1630, with special emphasis on trends and developments in the trade—issues of volume, prices and profits, the vicissitudes of supply and demand for silk and other goods, and an attempt to determine whether there was overall expansion of Iran's trade in the period to 1722, or, on the contrary a levelling off tending to stagnation. Equally important is the issue of whether there was any qualitative change in Iran's role as part of the external arena.

### **I.B.1. Iran's Relations with Holland**

The Dutch East India Company—the VOC—was Iran's pre-eminent trading partner for the balance of the seventeenth century. In the mid-1630s the VOC tried to achieve a monopoly on Iranian silk exports by cutting out both the English and the overland Levant trade. They bought up to 1,000 bales a year (over 200,000 pounds) of silk at whatever price was demanded, but by 1637-38 the project had failed due to continued use of the other routes and sources, and a fall in prices in Europe that left a gross profit rate of only 25 percent.<sup>65</sup> Dutch orders and Iranian deliveries fell to 200-500 bales a year in the 1640s and averaged 216 bales annually from 1655 to 1660; by the 1660s this silk no longer brought the VOC any profit at all.<sup>66</sup> In the 1650s the Dutch began to obtain silk more cheaply in Bengal which they were able to sell more expensively than Iran's product in Europe, for gross profits of about 200 percent in 1653-54.<sup>67</sup> Arguments over silk deliveries had led to a Dutch

<sup>65</sup> Kristoff Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740* (Copenhagen: Danish Science Press, and The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), 116-19; Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 376.

<sup>66</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740*, 119-21.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

attack on the island of Qishm, near Bandar 'Abbas in the Gulf, in 1645; though many men were lost to the heat, and the board of directors in Holland forbade further hostilities against Iran—that “stingy, proud nation”—‘Abbas II granted Commodore Block the right to purchase silk throughout the country and export it free of duties.<sup>68</sup> As suggested by the data above, however, even these terms failed to increase Dutch exports given the stability and cheapness of the Bengali supply.

The key to Dutch commercial supremacy in the seventeenth century was not its silk exports but rather its lucrative monopoly of the Asian spice trade *into* Iran. Mandelslo attested already in 1638 that the VOC “furnish all Persia with Pepper, Nutmegs, Cloves and other Spices.”<sup>69</sup> The VOC’s directors considered the trade with Iran in 1650 as “the most important for our Company, whereby our interport profits are notably increased, and therefore it should on no account be endangered.”<sup>70</sup> At Bandar ‘Abbas in the 1670s John Fryer observed:

... the greatest Traffick, next *Indian Cloth*, comes from the Spice Trade; which the *Dutch* engross, beside Sugar and Copper formerly, for which they carry off Fifty thousand *Thomands* worth of Velvets, Silk, Raw and Wrought, with Rich Carpets, besides many Turin of Gold and Silver, Yearly...<sup>71</sup>

The Dutch, then, by selling spices (and some of the Indian cloth referred to) in Iran and purchasing a limited amount of silk, had a quite favorable balance of trade with Iran, a development whose implications for Iran will be discussed later under the heading of fiscal crisis trends. It should be noted that the Dutch continued to use rather ruthless practices to guarantee their profits, once forcing Iranian merchants to buy spice cargoes to keep them from flooding the market, and another time burning four of six shiploads when their price was not met, compelling the local merchants to pay

<sup>68</sup> Emerson, “Ex Occidente Lux,” 157; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 365; Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 25, for the quote from the Heren XVII in a letter of April 26, 1650. The Dutch used force again in the Gulf in 1684, blockading Qishm and Bandar ‘Abbas; in 1685 they returned Qishm to Iran: Bayani, *Les Relations de l’Iran avec l’Europe*, 154.

<sup>69</sup> Mandelslo, quoted by Charles Issawi, “The Decline of Middle Eastern Trade, 1100-1850,” pp. 245-266 in D. S. Richards, editor, *Islam and the Trade of Asia. A Colloquium. Papers on Islamic History: II* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, and Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 264. The Dutch calculated that silk paid for with cash brought only a 75 percent profit compared with goods bought with cash at Surat in India, which yielded 300 percent when resold in Iran among other places: Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 382.

<sup>70</sup> Heren XVII, cited by Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 25. “A survey of the VOC’s Asian Trade in 1649-51, showed that Japan, Formosa, Surat, and Persia were yielding the greatest profits. On the other hand, the Moluccas and Ceylon were heavily in the red, owing to the expensive garrisons and fortresses needed to maintain those places against the Spaniards and the Portuguese respectively”: *ibid.*, 27.

<sup>71</sup> Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, II, 163.

the price of the six for the two that remained.<sup>72</sup>

From the 1650s to the 1680s the Dutch were the acknowledged leaders of the trade of Asia and the Persian Gulf. Ably directed by Governor-General Maetsuyker (1653-78), they possessed 140 well-armed ships and had 25,000 employees on their payroll.<sup>73</sup> The English EIC admitted their rival's predominance in a letter of 1664 from Bandar 'Abbas: "The Dutch walk away with all, and (to our sorrow) are now the sole actors."<sup>74</sup> According to Savory,

The value of the Dutch trade in the Persian Gulf in the middle of the seventeenth century has been estimated at 100,000 pounds sterling; English commerce had been almost swamped.... Thévenot, Fryer and Chardin all testify to the supremacy of Dutch trade in the Persian Gulf during the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>75</sup>

The Iranian governor of Bandar 'Abbas told the French commercial chief in 1674: "You say that your king has conquered the Hollanders' country; but seven of their ships have come here, and not one of yours, or of the English."<sup>76</sup>

There is some uncertainty as to whether or not Dutch commercial power may have peaked by the turn of the eighteenth century. Lockhart feels there was no decline before 1730, Boxer dates the beginnings of decline between 1700 and 1740.<sup>77</sup> VOC shipping did fall from 140 in 1664 to 124 in 1674 and then to 81 in 1704.<sup>78</sup> And though Anglo-Dutch wars from 1652-54, 1665-67 and 1672-74 ended with Dutch victories in Asia, the basic issues were decided in the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>79</sup> Meanwhile the French were defeated on the Indian Ocean from 1672 to 1676, but had to be fought again, 1688-97.<sup>80</sup> Holden Furber nevertheless considers the period from 1680 to 1710 to have been "highly prosperous" for the VOC, and profits of 211 percent and 153 percent were recorded in

<sup>72</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 153-54, based on Chardin, *Voyages*, IX, 138-40, and Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, II, 163.

<sup>73</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 51.

<sup>74</sup> Gombroon to Surat, April 23, 1664, *India Office G/36/104*, p. 76, cited by Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 48 note 4.

<sup>75</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 119. Cf. Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 29, who calls the period from 1653 to 1678 "the most prosperous and prestigious years of the VOC."

<sup>76</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 367, citing Chardin, *Voyages*, IX, 71-72 (translation mine).

<sup>77</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 427, 434 note 2, based on C. H. Wilson, *Anglo-Dutch Commerce and Finance in the XVIIIth Century* (Cambridge, 1941); Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 71-72.

<sup>78</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 51-52.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 29, 47. Lockhart feels these wars weakened the Dutch: *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 367.

<sup>80</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 29; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 123, based on Wood, *The Levant Company*, 52-58, 99-100.

1682-83 for trade with Iran.<sup>81</sup>

If specific components of the trade are considered, silk continued to be a sporadic item at best in the 1690s; a 1701 agreement promised the VOC 100 bales a year at 44 tumans a bale.<sup>82</sup> Glamann feels the amounts received were negligible and ceased altogether around 1716/17.<sup>83</sup> Dutch import records show a new Iranian product—Kirmani wool—after 1680; “considerable quantities” were involved, making it more important than silk for the Dutch by 1700, while another new Iranian export carried by the Dutch was tobacco, which went to Dutch establishments in Bengal.<sup>84</sup> Valuable and increasing quantities also of “Asian piece goods” (hand-manufactured textiles) reached Amsterdam from 1674 to 1729 but it would appear that this involved Indian cotton fabrics more than silk products from Iran.<sup>85</sup> As before, the main Dutch profits accrued from their exports to Iran, led by spices and including some one million pounds of sugar from Java and Bengal annually between 1680 and 1709.<sup>86</sup> Exports of Dutch cloth were down considerably by 1702; in this field the English fared better.<sup>87</sup> This proved true also of coffee, for Iranians and Indians preferred that of Mocha (brought by the English) to that from Dutch Java, though the VOC could discern no difference nor admit that “a bunch of boorish Turks and Persians should have so much tastier tongues than we and others like us.”<sup>88</sup> Also on the debit side the Dutch had to pay or “lend” the large sum of 14,000 tumans to Shah Sultan Husayn and others in 1712-13, which was apparently never recovered.<sup>89</sup> Between 1715 and 1717 there was much hard bargaining between Dutch and Iranian diplomatic missions leading

<sup>81</sup> Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 334; Robert Dillon, “Carpet Capitalism and craft involution in Kirman, Iran: A study in economic anthropology,” Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University (1976), 207ff.

<sup>82</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 397, says the Dutch received no silk at all in 1695. Ferrier reports a silk contract for 300 bales a year in 1694, and says that the 1701 offer was for 200 bales a year: “Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period,” 464.

<sup>83</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740*, 126. In 1698, Glamann reports that 74,090 Dutch pounds’ worth of silk was imported from Iran (about equal to Dutch imports from Bengal); in 1699 and 1700, no silk was imported from Iran and twice as much from Bengal: *ibid.*, 127 Table 23.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 22; Ferrier, “Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period,” 480; Saleh, “Social Formations in Iran,” 113 note 86. On tobacco, see Kristoff Glamann, “Bengal and the World Trade about 1700,” pp. 30-39 in *Bengal Past and Present* (Journal of the Calcutta Historical Society), volume LXXVI (1957), 36.

<sup>85</sup> See the table in Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 56, based on Glamann, “Bengal and the World Trade about 1700,” 32.

<sup>86</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740*, 161.

<sup>87</sup> Emerson, “Ex Occidente Lux,” 125, based on Wood, *The Levant Company*, 99-100.

<sup>88</sup> Cited by Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 61-63.

<sup>89</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 401.

eventually to favorable terms for the former. In addition, the Dutch employees engaged in considerable (though forbidden) private trading on the side; it was alleged that the Dutch director at Bandar 'Abbas "has the opportunity of making a vast fortune in a short time, so that, in general, in 4 or 5 years, he has no further occasion to concern himself with commerce."<sup>90</sup>

What then should be concluded about a possible decline of the Dutch toward the end of the period leading up to 1722? It would seem that while certain products experienced a decline in popularity or were eliminated from the trade altogether, others were found to take their place. In absolute terms both total trade and the profits to be made remained great, at least till 1710 after which internal conditions in Iran became less settled. The period after 1700 or so most likely witnessed less any absolute decline for the Dutch as a relative closing of the considerable gap that had separated them from their main rivals in Safavid Iran, the English.

### **I.B.2. Iran's Relations with England**

The English East India Company (EIC) attempted to build on its promising beginnings in the silk trade after 'Abbas's death in 1629. From 1631 to 1640, some 371 bales of silk (100 kilograms each) were shipped from Iran annually.<sup>91</sup> Silk bought for 7 shillings, 6 pence a pound in 1640 sold in England for 17 shillings, a profit of 127 percent.<sup>92</sup> Shortly after 1640 however the English silk purchases stopped altogether, as prices fell in Europe and rose in Iran, and supplies became difficult to obtain since Armenian merchants were apparently carrying the bulk of the crop overland to the Levant ports on the Mediterranean.<sup>93</sup> The years 1637 to 1652 were nevertheless prosperous ones for the EIC in the Gulf, due mainly to a large carrying trade of Armenian and Indian merchants on English shipping, considerable exports of English cloth to Iran (which on occasion flooded the

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 384, citing "Voyage around the World, by Commodore Roggewein, in 1721-1723," in Robert Kerr, *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels* (Edinburgh, 1814), volume XI, 158.

<sup>91</sup> These figures are averaged from Steensgaard's tables, and do not include the figure for 1636, which is not known: *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 395 table 19. For slightly different yearly totals, see Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 155, based on Mandelslo, *Journal and Observations*, 10, 17, and Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, 66 note, 67, 100 note.

<sup>92</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 479.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 459; Steensgaard's list shows a drop to 43 bales in 1641 and then none from 1642 to 1646: *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 395 table 19.

market), and much private trading by the company's factors and sailors between Surat in India and Bandar 'Abbas.<sup>94</sup> A letter from Surat to the EIC of 1650/51 declares that "Persia is the most certain trade of all."<sup>95</sup>

By 1650 in fact, however, serious problems were undermining the EIC both at home and in Asia. On the one hand, Cromwell and the Puritans had little taste for silk, and on the other, the period from 1650 to 1680 was one of Dutch military and economic hegemony in the Gulf. Though the EIC continued its trade with India (and could report it had doubled its capital in a single year, 1676), Emerson describes a complete lack of activity at Bandar 'Abbas in 1669, and Fryer comments on its small scale in 1677.<sup>96</sup> Competition came not only from the VOC, which destroyed six English ships off Hormuz in 1652, but also from the English Levant Company and the free-lance traders known as the "Interlopers."<sup>97</sup> Another problem derived from the underpayment of the EIC's stipulated one-half of the Bandar 'Abbas customs in exchange for their naval aid at Hormuz in 1622. Though the annual customs were estimated at 15-22,000 tumans in the seventeenth century, the English invariably received less than 1,000 since the Iranian government maintained that the EIC had failed in its obligation to keep warships in the Gulf (and also resented continual payments for one-time assistance).<sup>98</sup> By 1679, "the Company's prospects in Persia seemed so bad that it seriously considered abandoning its connection with that country."<sup>99</sup>

Nevertheless, this is not what happened; rather, the next forty years witnessed concerted attempts to revive the EIC's trade, on a somewhat new basis: in addition to the carrying trade

<sup>94</sup> Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 42; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 469-71; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 154. Keyvani notes that Iranian merchants were largely left with the interprovincial trade, though he reports that four of them travelled all the way to London in 1636-37: *Artisans and Guild Life*, 232-34.

<sup>95</sup> Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 48, citing *India Office*, E/3/21/2204, Surat to E.I.Co., 31 January 1650/51.

<sup>96</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 47; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 156, citing Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, II, 164.

<sup>97</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the Mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 461; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 366.

<sup>98</sup> Estimates of the customs at Bandar 'Abbas are compiled by Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 170, citing Tavernier, Chardin, Fryer and Mandelslo. Ferrier provides data on the sums received by the EIC from 1624 to 1670: "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 458, 488. Lockhart follows the vicissitudes of the payments through 1707: *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 394-97. See also Chardin, *Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia* (London: The Argonaut Press, 1927), 101-03, 110.

<sup>99</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 367.

characteristic of the Dutch, and the search for raw materials, especially silk and wool, the English began increasingly to seek markets for their "industrial" manufactures, particularly cloth.<sup>100</sup> In 1682 the company resolved to expand cloth sales, if necessary by undercutting the established overland trade between the English Levant Company and Armenian intermediaries.<sup>101</sup> In 1688 the English expressed high hopes in an agreement with a wealthy Armenian resident in England named Callendar.<sup>102</sup> Though neither project bore fruit, the EIC was issued a new charter in 1693, stipulating that it export at least one hundred thousand pounds' worth of English manufactures annually to the East.<sup>103</sup> Five large-scale Armenian merchants—Khwaja Murat Sarhad, Khwaja Mercara Sarhad, Khwaja Googas Callendar, Khwaja Gregory Coldarente and Kwaja Hoan Coldarente—were approached to handle the sale of the English goods aboard the *Mary* and *Nassau* in 1693, and the *Charles II* in 1694. These three cargoes carried nearly one-third of the EIC's goods in those years, mostly cloths and woolen manufactures, and a little lead—some 93,995 out of 319,352 pounds sterling.<sup>104</sup> A major success occurred in 1696 when almost the whole cloth consignment of the *Charles II* was sold to the stocking makers of Isfahan "in one transaction on reasonably satisfactory terms."<sup>105</sup> Shortly after, in 1697, the English obtained new decrees from Shah Sultan Husayn, providing for 1) exemption from road taxes, 2) the right to purchase as much Kirman wool as they wished, 3) payment of four years' arrears on the Bandar 'Abbas customs, 4) posting of guards in dangerous areas, and 5) restitution for goods seized by robbers.<sup>106</sup>

In general, however, the new trade policy encountered difficulties. In the early 1690s war with France made shipping hazardous and money expensive to obtain; in the mid-1690s there was a glut of English cloth in the Iranian market and simultaneous high prices and restricted supplies for Iran's

<sup>100</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 220, citing Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia* (London, 1684 edition), 264. The point about a new basis for English trade is made by Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 206-07.

<sup>101</sup> See the letter of May 16, 1682 from Gombroon to the E.I.Co., cited by Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 49.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 51 note 4, citing *Charters granted to the East-India Company from 1601; also the Treaties and Grants ... from the year 1756 to 1772*, 165.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 54, 54 note 2.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>106</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 388-89.

silk.<sup>107</sup> Ferrier considers the English project a total failure and discerns a number of reasons: 1) Armenian unwillingness to change their overland routes, and internal divisions within the community, 2) the immaturity of EIC agents in Iran, 3) the poor quality of their cloth, and 4) growing competition (or at least the perception of it) with the route through Russia. With respect to Armenian disinterest in working with the EIC:

As for bringing Silk to Ispahan [the Armenians said in 1697], yt is but wind, for nobody will be so mad, when we carry it to Aleppo: we have more ways than one to dispose of it; for there are English, French, Venetians and Dutch; if we cannot sell them for ready money, part money, cloth, Cocheneal, amber, Coral, or false pearl; then we can carry it to Europe our Selves; but if we bring it to Ispahan there is only you to buy it, and if you won't give us a price, then we must let you have it as you will; and take cloth at what price you will; for you won't let us put it on board your ships for England.<sup>108</sup>

On the poor quality of the English cloth, it was reported home that the cargoes of the *Mary* and *Nassau* were "the worst that ever we saw ... it will be a matter to pick out enough to make a pair of stockings."<sup>109</sup> The English continued to entertain high hopes of selling cloth and buying silk in Iran after 1700, but Ferrier feels these were in general dashed.<sup>110</sup> A rival East India Company sprang up in 1698 and it took from 1702 to 1709 for the "Old" and "New" EICs to merge their sixty ships.<sup>111</sup> In 1711, however, Charles Lockyer considered that Iran was "a main branch of the Company's Profit... So that I look upon English ships from Persia to Surat in the latter end of October and November, to be the richest Vessels on that side of the world... sometimes to the value of two or three hundred thousand Pounds."<sup>112</sup>

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 389-90; Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 55.

<sup>108</sup> From a letter of July 15, 1697 from Isfahan to the E.I.Co., *India Office E/3/53/6417*, cited by Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," 56. It is interesting that the English saw in this not sharp business sense but rather the Armenians' being wedded to the old ways: *ibid.*, 56 note 5.

Internally, the Armenian community was divided in the 1680s and 1690s 1) along religious lines between Gregorian (orthodox) and Catholic families, with the Sarhads as Catholic converts and Callendars on opposite sides, while some turned at least nominally Muslim, and 2) over material interests, with one group trading overland to the Levant Company and others (notably the Callendars) trading by sea to India. These splits made it impossible for the EIC to work with the five merchants chosen, and the idea was given up by 1697: *ibid.*, 58-59.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 58 note 1, citing *India Office E/3/50/5972*, Persia to E.I.Co., February 4, 1694/95.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62.

<sup>111</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 54.

<sup>112</sup> Charles Lockyer, *An Account of Trade in India* (London, 1711), 251, cited by Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 461.

The actual case may become clearer if we study the principal items in the trade, which also provide insight into developments in the Iranian economy. Silk went not through the Gulf, but overland to Aleppo; carried by Armenians who could choose their European partners, it seems that the English Levant Company purchased as many as 1,000 bales a year there in the seventeenth century.<sup>113</sup> Iranian silk bought by the English in 1708 for 8 shillings, 4 pence sold in England for 12 shillings, 2 pence; the 46 percent mark-up was considered unprofitable.<sup>114</sup> The EIC, like the VOC, thus turned to Bengali silk after 1650.<sup>115</sup> In its place, another product, Kirmani goats' hair wool (called *kurk*) was coming into its own. The English discovered it in 1659 and found it useful for making buttons and hats. By 1698 exports had reached more than 300 bales a year and large profits of 100 percent or more were made on its sale in England.<sup>116</sup> Ferrier notes that the foreign demand led to development of the Iranian wool industry:

... the production of this wool stimulated a local weaving industry which emerged in the 1670s, causing less supplies for the European companies. By the mid 1680s there was no doubt that the main reason for these restrictions was "the yearly increase of weavers who get their living by weaving that Commodity" in Kirman.<sup>117</sup>

Other Iranian exports carried by the EIC included gold brocade, tapestries and carpets, cloths, leather work, nuts and dried fruits, some valuable stones and wine from Shiraz. Most of these went to England, with the wine going to India.<sup>118</sup> After English weavers rioted in the streets in the 1690s, Parliament passed an act requiring "the manufactures of Persia, China, or East-India" to be re-exported; these then went "throughout Europe from Archangel and Bergen to Istanbul and Seville."<sup>119</sup>

In terms of English exports to Iran, the vicissitudes of the key cloth trade were suggested above. In the seventeenth century the Levant Company appears to have carried far more to the

<sup>113</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 125, based on Wood, *The Levant Company*, 145 note.

<sup>114</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 479.

<sup>115</sup> Krishna, *Commercial Relations*, 142; K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean. An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 92.

<sup>116</sup> Lockhart cites a French memorandum of 1716 on 100 percent profits: *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 384, 385 note. Ferrier's data on volume and prices from the 1670s to 1720 suggest even larger profits: "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 480.

<sup>117</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 480, citing an EIC letter of February 23, 1684/85.

<sup>118</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 385.

<sup>119</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 55. Dutch weavers and textile manufacturers had no comparable political clout.

Middle East via the Ottoman ports, some of which went on to Iran, than the EIC did to the Gulf through Surat.<sup>120</sup> The EIC sent factors to Tabriz and Mashhad in 1696, hoping to sell cloth, and though representatives remained for twenty years in Tabriz total sales were probably not high.<sup>121</sup> The EIC tried to sell a shipment of granulated West Indian sugar in Iran in 1682 but Iranians preferred the lump sugar of Bengal provided by the Dutch; the reverse was true of English coffee sent from Mocha which we saw was favored over that which the Dutch brought from Java.<sup>122</sup> In the eighteenth century, "there was a phenomenal growth of the Indo-European "country-trade" in the Indian Ocean, particularly British";<sup>123</sup> though it is unclear how early this occurred and in what measure it affected Iran, the point is well-taken that the carrying trade remained important to the EIC.

A "special" export of the EIC continued to be bullion. Chaudhuri's careful study shows that silver and gold accounted for 60 to 90 percent of total EIC exports to Asia from the 1660s to 1720; the proportion was especially high from 1705 to 1720.<sup>124</sup> He notes that "the terms of trade appeared to have deteriorated against European goods" from circa 1660 to 1700, but this only highlights the fact that "treasure" became the most profitable EIC export.<sup>125</sup> And indeed, in 1719 silver sold for 9.9 percent more in Madras than in London.<sup>126</sup> While the EIC's bullion exports for 1698 to 1703 totalled 3,171,404 pounds sterling in silver and 128,229 in gold, re-exports of Asian commodities to Europe and the Americas were worth *double* these amounts, a profit of 100 percent.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>120</sup> See Emerson's data, "Ex Occidente Lux," 125-26.

<sup>121</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 390.

<sup>122</sup> Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, 19; Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 62-63.

<sup>123</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 75.

<sup>124</sup> K. N. Chaudhuri, "Treasure and Trade Balances: the East India Company's Export Trade, 1660-1720," pp. 480-502 in *Economic History Review*, Second Series, volume XXI, number 3 (December 1968), 483 figure 1, 497-98 appendix, table 1. Though Lockhart claims "Both the English and Dutch Companies exported [from Iran] large quantities of gold and silver in bullion or in coin" (*The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 386 note 6), I see no evidence of this in the case of the English, whose cloth exports fell far short of the Dutch spice exports, leaving an undoubted net trade deficit with Iran.

<sup>125</sup> Chaudhuri, "Treasure and Trade Balances," 486.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* As Isaac Newton observed in 1717: "... in China and Japan one pound weight of fine gold is worth but nine or ten pounds weight of fine silver, and in the East Indies it may be worth twelve. And this low price of gold in proportion to silver carries away the silver from Europe": cited in *ibid.*, 489.

<sup>127</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 55.

By 1700 or so, the EIC had surpassed the VOC in the trade with China and India,<sup>128</sup> but in Iran, as we have seen, the silk trade did not take off and the cloth trade had its limits, while the country trade and the export of silver were very profitable. The best conclusion overall would probably be that by the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the Dutch were being commercially challenged by the EIC but less from any conspicuous English success in Iran than due to the EIC's rising fortunes in the world-system as a whole. Though the VOC remained first in Iran's foreign trade, the relationship with its main European competitor was no longer hegemonic, as in the period from 1650 to the 1680s.

### **I.B.3. Iran's Relations with other European Nations**

None of Iran's other European trading partners could come close to the volume and presence of England and Holland in the period under consideration here. The French, as a European great power, made the most strenuous efforts, but failed to establish continuous commercial relations. From 1630 to 1660 France was preoccupied by the Fronde rebellion and war with Spain. In 1664 the Compagnie des Indes Orientales—which shall be designated CIO, though later its name was changed to the Compagnie Française des Indes—was formed. Though its members quarrelled among themselves at Isfahan in 1665, the shah granted them a *farman* promising such notable privileges as exemption from tolls and duties for three years, and all trading rights that had been or would be granted to other foreigners. A permanent commercial treaty was promised upon receipt of "suitable presents," but as these were not forthcoming, the next *farman* in 1673 provided only for trading freely and no exceptional or exclusive privileges.<sup>129</sup> Little official French trade occurred for the rest of the seventeenth century due to stiff competition from the EIC and VOC, France's involvement in continental wars, and French emphasis on the far eastern trade with Siam and China.<sup>130</sup> Fryer comments on the lack of French trade at Bandar 'Abbas in the 1670s:

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>129</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavī Dynasty*, 431-32; Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 168-69.

<sup>130</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavī Dynasty*, 432.

The French have as little to do at this Port as in other Places; and were it not for the Credit of their Interpreter, who gets good Profit by Wine (He being privileg'd with a Wine-press for that Nation at Siras, as well as the other Europe Nations), they could not subsist.<sup>131</sup>

In 1705, the French factory at Bandar 'Abbas was found unoccupied by Charles Lockyer.<sup>132</sup>

Interest in improving contacts still persisted on both sides, however. Shah Sultan Husayn sent a letter to France in 1699 proposing an alliance against Muscat in the Gulf, but this letter never reached its destination.<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick enabled France to resume attention to its eastern trade, and Pondichery in India was won from the Dutch.<sup>134</sup> An embassy left France in March 1705, which after many intrigues and adventures arrived at Isfahan in May 1708, and by September had succeeded, despite the obstruction of the other Europeans and the hard bargaining of the Iranians, in obtaining a *treaty* (not a series of renewable decrees) that included the following terms:

Article 2—exemption from duties for five years.

Article 7—the right to import and export 21,000 tumans' worth of gold and silver.

Article 8—the right to import into Iran at 3 percent 7,000 tumans' worth of Indian goods and 14,000 of European or Turkish goods; above these amounts they would pay 10 percent.

Article 9—exemption for 500 loads of goods from road tolls.

The usual stipulations regarding legal precedence, restitution for stolen goods and protection of missionaries were also included; article 30 specified that French ships take on "at the ordinary passenger fare, Persian merchants and traders who may be in Hindustan or in other lands."<sup>135</sup> The French, however, once again failed to follow this up, not ratifying the treaty until November 1711 and sending no goods and no diplomatic/trade representative.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, II, 164, cited by Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 465-66.

<sup>132</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 379.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 435.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

<sup>135</sup> "Capitulation Granted by Shah Sultan Husayn to France (7 September 1708)," pp. 33-38 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I. Also, Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 451; Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 184ff.

<sup>136</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 453; Bayani, *Les Relations de l'Iran avec l'Europe*, 193.

The Iranians did not give up on the French even then. The chief vazir, Fath 'Ali Khan Daghistani, was particularly inclined to encourage them as a counterweight to the Dutch and English, and as possible naval allies in Gulf operations against the Muscat Arabs.<sup>137</sup> The kalantar of Erivan, Muhammad Reza Beg, was sent as ambassador to Louis XIV in 1715, and though not empowered to make a new treaty, under French pressure he agreed to a "Treaty of Friendship and Commerce," which gave the French unlimited rights to export and import any goods, to any amount, with no entrance/exit duties or internal tolls (article 2), as well as a sort of "most favored nation" clause (article 11).<sup>138</sup> Realizing his indiscretion, the Iranian ambassador poisoned himself at Erivan when he returned in 1717. Thus when the French ambassador, Ange de Gardanne, reached the court in April/May 1718 he was told that the treaty could not be honored, especially as the French were providing no help against Muscat.<sup>139</sup> While in Iran there was disillusion with France's lack of will or ability to project itself militarily and economically as far as the Persian Gulf, in France the merchants of Marseilles actively discouraged their government from permitting the CIO to do business in Iran (presumably due to their own interest in the eastern Mediterranean trade in the Ottoman Empire).<sup>140</sup> A Carmelite letter of 1719 from Isfahan makes reference to the bankruptcy of the French East India Company; in Furber's view, "it is extremely unlikely that between 1663 and 1793 the proceeds of the sales of homeward cargoes exceeded the costs of their procurements, even without taking account of naval and military expense."<sup>141</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 252; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 542-43.

<sup>138</sup> Text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 40-41.

<sup>139</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 465. In a bizarre footnote that is symbolically apropos of the vagaries of French relations with Iran, the treaty was eventually ratified in April/May 1722, actually during the siege of Isfahan which would void it completely by leading to the Safavids' overthrow.

<sup>140</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 467, citing the Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Perse, vol. IV, fol. 165, 31 July 1715.

The French traded heavily with the Ottomans in the seventeenth century: after a decline in the trade from 30 million livres in the early 1600s to 14 million in 1635, 7 million in 1648 and 2.5-3 million by 1660 the French recovered and passed the English in the Levant by the 1690s: Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 122-126. The problem is knowing how much of this trade was carried beyond the Ottoman realms to Iran. Certainly much of the raw silk handled in the Ottoman ports was of Iranian provenance, and this item comprised 45.5 percent of French imports from the Levant in 1700-1702: Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East," 204. Emerson says that the very large amount of 3,000 bales of Iranian silk went to Izmir around 1670: "Ex Occidente Lux," 121, based on Masson, *Histoire du commerce français*, 421.

<sup>141</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 515; Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 334.

Just as French interests in the Levant made any contact with Iran indirect (given the inadequacies of the French East India Company), so too, as earlier in the Safavid period, with the Italians. The Venetian cloth trade in the Ottoman ports moreover fell from 20,000 pieces in the early seventeenth century to 10,000 by 1650 and 2,500 by 1700.<sup>142</sup> Venice's raw silk imports from the same termini likewise plunged from 1,500 bales circa 1600 to 330 in 1636; in 1680 they took only 63 bales.<sup>143</sup> How much of this trade made its way from Izmir, Alexandretta and Smyrna across Anatolia into Iran (and vice versa) is not possible to quantify; the silk figures in any case dropped precipitously and probably little of the Italian cloth made it to Iran.

Portuguese and Spanish "contact" with Iran had been largely based on displays of naval power in the Gulf, as we saw in Chapter Two. Their loss of Hormuz to the Iranian-English expedition in 1622 was softened slightly when Shah 'Abbas accorded them the right to one-half the customs due at the lesser port of Kong in 1625. When Portuguese naval power was further undermined after their expulsion from Muscat in 1650, followed by the loss of Ceylon in 1657, they, like the English at Bandar 'Abbas, found it increasingly difficult to make good on their claim. Of the 60,000 écus to which they were entitled they would often receive only 5,000. They sent seven ships to Kong in 1670, and again in 1672, which led to an agreement for a flat sum of 15,000 écus a year, but they were often cheated of this as well. Having lived by the sword, their position fell irretrievably with the waning of their military might in the Indian Ocean and Gulf in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>144</sup>

Other Europeans who made at least limited contact with Iran in the Safavid period included Germans, Swedes and Poles. In 1636, Duke Friedrich of Holstein sent a mission to arrange the purchase of raw silk for an industry he hoped to establish in his new city of Friedrichstadt. Hindered by the Dutch, the mission returned empty-handed in December 1637. Olearius's important record remains one of the best travellers' accounts of seventeenth-century Iran—he was secretary to the two

<sup>142</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 121, based on Sella, *Commerci e industrie a Venezia*, 117-18.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, based on Sella's lists, 111-12, 115.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-69; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 360, 361, 426; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavî Dynasty*, 362 note 1, 365.

envoys, Crusius and Brugman.<sup>145</sup> Another "non-starter" was Sweden. In 1679 Ludwich (or Ludvig) Fabritius was sent as "envoy extraordinary to Russia and Persia," returning to Sweden in 1682 unable to commit Iran to joint action against the Ottomans, who were threatening Europe as far as Poland and the southern Baltic. Charles XI sent him to Iran again in 1683-84, and again his search for a military alliance and commercial treaty proved unsuccessful. He returned to Iran one more time in 1697.<sup>146</sup> Poland seems to have maintained longer and perhaps more continuous relations with Iran than any of these Europeans. There is a record from 1601 of an order for several carpets by King Sigismund III Vasa (reigned 1587-1632), who sent his court purveyor, Sefer Muratowicz, of Armenian origin, to Kashan.<sup>147</sup> A Polish embassy of 1647 was honored and given a bale of silk as a gift; much later in the century we find references to Polish embassies to Iran in 1670 and 1684, and to the presence of a more permanent ambassador at Isfahan, the Jesuit Father Ignatius Zapolski, in 1694.<sup>148</sup> There is no evidence of commercial relations beyond the sending of the embassies which generally carried some presents and possibly goods to trade.

#### **I.B.4. Iran's Relations with Neighboring World-Empires**

A final, important set of countries in contact with Iran in the seventeenth century includes its immediate neighbors, mostly world-empires like Iran itself. Russia fits better into this group than it does into the European nations, both due to its relative isolation from Europe until this very period, and to the fact that its proximity to Safavid Iran after 1600 made contact easier and entailed a "security" dimension which would explode into invasion and occupation in the 1720s. These aspects it shared in common with the Ottoman Empire, the Mughals and the Uzbeks.

<sup>145</sup> Lockhart, "European Contacts with Persia, 1350-1736," 397. Olearius, *The Ambassadors*.

<sup>146</sup> Lockhart, "European Contact with Persia, 1350-1736," 402. Boxer observes that "Danish and Swedish competition in Asia was of less account [than other Europeans], although not negligible in the burgeoning China Trade at Canton": *Jan Compagnie*, 59. There was also a company at Canton called the "Ostenders," patronized at Ostend, Belgium by the Austrian Emperor Charles VI, but there is no record of their presence in the Persian Gulf.

<sup>147</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 139, citing Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, volume VI, 2433.

<sup>148</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 403, 425, 462-63; Lockhart, "European Contacts with Persia, 1350-1736," 402.

After turning inwards during the Time of Troubles (1603-13), the Russian economy began a recovery in the 1640s. What might be called the "embassy trade," whose beginnings we saw in Chapter Two, continued with Russian ambassador-traders coming to Iran in 1618, 1623, 1626, 1654 and 1664, and, on the Iranian side, a reciprocal movement:

In 1641 Hasan Beg came [to Moscow] with carpets worth 3,479 roubles; in 1649 Muhammad Quli Beg brought carpets, velvets, raw silk and saltpetre to the value of 8,500 roubles; and in 1658 Khan 'Adku' Sultān arrived with raw-silk and saltpetre worth 9,097 roubles.<sup>149</sup>

The 1663-65 Russian caravan included some 800 people (400 of them merchants) with total goods worth 76,749 rubles, about one-half in furs. Other items included hunting birds for the shah, copper, tin, leather, cloth, writing paper and swan's down. When it was discovered in Isfahan that they were using diplomatic credentials to sell many of these goods duty-free, the two ambassadors heading the mission were not well-treated.<sup>150</sup> In 1673 however Chardin reported that the Russian ambassador was given precedence over the French and English, the Iranians stating that "The Muscovite is our neighbor and our friend, and trade has been established between us without interruption and for a long time (*d'ancienneté*)."<sup>151</sup> Notwithstanding this warm avowal, another ambassador who arrived in 1697 to ask Iran to declare war on the Ottomans and repay an alleged debt of 300,000 tumans was thrown into prison until 1699 for procedural improprieties at court.<sup>152</sup>

Armenian merchants were encouraged by the Russians to engage in a transit trade from Asia to Russia and on to Europe by the grant of extensive privileges in 1667. Some silk made its way across Russia to Archangel and Europe—in the mid-seventeenth century perhaps 50 bales a year on the average, while cloth went in the other direction, causing English merchants to complain in the 1690s. The amounts on the whole were probably fairly modest without being negligible, as customs records show some 40 Iranian merchants leaving Astrakhan in 1676 with Russian goods, 30 in 1680, 25 in 1681, 50 in 1686, 20 or more in 1687 and 1688.<sup>153</sup> Cossack raids across the Caspian in 1668 when

<sup>149</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 177; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 472.

<sup>150</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 182-83; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 57-58.

<sup>151</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 171, cited by Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 472. See also Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 178-79.

<sup>152</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 61-62.

1,000 inhabitants of Farahabad were captured or killed, and Stenka Razin's rebellion in Russia from 1664 to 1671 disrupted the smooth functioning of this trade.<sup>154</sup> Other, more official, Russian interference in Iran came elsewhere, as in Christian Georgia, where Russia supported its own claimant to the throne in 1674.<sup>155</sup> In 1700, the Khan of Khiva, in Uzbek Khwarazm, declared allegiance to Peter the Great, stimulating Russian interest in the Caspian Sea area and beyond to Central Asia. Russian ships were denied free entry into the Iranian port of Baku in the same year.<sup>156</sup>

These events and practices formed part of the larger interests of Peter the Great (ruled 1682-1725) in establishing closer relations—to divert Iran's lucrative silk trade into Russia and to open up a trading corridor to India across the Caspian and Central Asia.<sup>157</sup> Embassies in 1701 and 1708 were followed in 1717 by one under Artemii Volynsky, who obtained the right for Russian merchants to trade freely in Iran and buy as much raw silk as they wished. Volynsky also observed the growing disorders in the country and lack of leadership at the court, reporting that Sultan Husayn was "the subject of his subjects, and I am certain that it is rare to find such a fool even amongst ordinary people, not to say crowned heads."<sup>158</sup>

It is clear then that Russian contact with Iran through 1720 had its ups and downs, commercially, politically, and diplomatically. The trade, royal and private, persisted through internal upheavals, robbers and a difficult route, but cannot be judged great or continuous. Peter's budding expansionary designs were held in check between 1700 and 1721 by Russia's long war with Sweden and intermittent conflicts with the Ottomans, but when these involvements ceased and even before the Safavid state crumbled in 1722, aggressive action would be forthcoming, as we shall see.

<sup>153</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 179-80, 193-94; Ferrier, "Trade from the Mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 473-74. The silk figure of 50 bales a year is based on Emerson's estimate of 900 *puds* (36 pounds to the *pud*) every three years. The Dutch reported in 1698 that for each of the past two years Armenians had exported more than 1,000 bales of silk through Russia: Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740*, 126.

<sup>154</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 174-75; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 473; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 306.

<sup>155</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 173. In 1639, the Georgian King T'eimuraz of Kakheti had sworn allegiance to the tsar: Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 57.

<sup>156</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 62.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 59, 176.

<sup>158</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 106.

With the powerful Ottoman Empire to the west, hostilities flared up in the 1630s at Erivan, Tabriz and Baghdad, but finally ended for a long time in 1639 when the Treaty of Zuhab delimited the borders between the two countries.<sup>159</sup> Despite local requests from Mesopotamia in 1684-85 and Basra in 1690 to re-establish Iranian rule, this peace was maintained; Iran did rule Basra from 1697 to 1701, taking the city from an Arab rebel, but restored it to the Ottomans eventually. Though there was renewed interest around 1700 for joint action with Europe (Austria, Venice, Poland, Russia) against the Ottoman Empire, as usual due to logistics and tangled diplomacy, it came to nothing.<sup>160</sup> Fortunately for Iran, these Ottoman campaigns in the West kept its armies occupied on distant fronts until 1718.

This long period of peace revitalized the overland transit routes from Iran to the Levant ports. Though the Asian spice trade was definitively diverted to sea-routes around Africa by the Europeans in the seventeenth century, this was not true of Iran's silk trade.<sup>161</sup> We have seen that the Armenians preferred taking the overland route because they could play the Europeans off against each other (and the Ottomans) in the Mediterranean ports and other Ottoman entrepôts. Ferrier describes the nature of the trade: "In Aleppo, Bursa, Smyrna and Istanbul the silk was traded principally for cloth or money, but other goods such as glass, arms, watches and objects of fashion were bought for import to Persia."<sup>162</sup> Some 3,000 bales of silk reached Izmir in 1670; in addition, a new product, "mutton on the hoof" from Tabriz and Hamadan found its way to Anatolia and Istanbul.<sup>163</sup> Several salient points emerge: the trade was largely in Armenian hands, which profited the Iranian economy; it was basically a transit trade across rather than into the Ottoman Empire, which means that most of the final sales were to Europeans while the Ottomans collected the tolls and bought *some* of the silk; the balance of this trade was greatly in Iran's favor, which had the positive effect of increasing the

<sup>159</sup> See "Treaty of Peace and Frontiers: The Ottoman Empire and Persia," in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 21.

<sup>160</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 495-97.

<sup>161</sup> On the spice trade's diversion, see Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 28, who dates it around 1650, and Steensgaard, *The Asian Trade Revolution*, 170, who puts it earlier, circa 1600. Lockhart says the costs on the Cape of Good Hope route were only one-third what they had been via Aleppo: *The Fall of the Safavī Dynasty*, 368 note 1.

<sup>162</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 472.

<sup>163</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 121, based on Masson, *Histoire du commerce français*, 421; Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 202.

amount of money in circulation in Iran, but did expose the economy to Ottoman inflation, whose impact will be assessed below. The size of this transit trade is very difficult to estimate: Ferrier makes an "inspired guess" of a little less than 700,000 pounds sterling worth of imports from Turkey in the mid-seventeenth century; in 1801 Malcolm thought it accounted for over one-quarter of Iran's total foreign trade.<sup>164</sup> It must be borne in mind that of these amounts a portion only remained in the Ottoman Empire, whose main economic function for Iran was as a major land route to the West.

Iran's diplomatic and commercial relations with India in the seventeenth century were similar in some respects, different in others. Militarily, the Safavids retook Qandahar from the Mughals in 1648 and successfully defended it in 1650 and 1653. This dispute aside, relations between the two empires were friendly. An overland trade route went through Qandahar, of which Richard Bell said in 1654, "Qandahar brings vast Customes to the King of Persia."<sup>165</sup> Trade in the Gulf with India was stimulated by the expulsion of the Portuguese, and the English report it had quadrupled in the 1630s; much of the increase was carried on Indian shipping to Surat and Gujarat generally.<sup>166</sup> Ferrier lists Iran's imports from India as copper, iron and steel; white calicos (the name derives from Calicut, on the Malabar coast), sashes and colored cloths; ginger, saffron, cardamon, camphor, tamarind, 300 tons of sugar, 100 of pepper and 10 of cloves a year (but many of the spices were in Dutch hands); 20,000 sheets of paper annually from Ahmadabad; and coffee from Mocha (controlled by the English).<sup>167</sup> Fryer said that at Bandar 'Abbas in the 1670s the largest trade was that of Indian cloth; one-third of total Indian production may have gone to or through Iran.<sup>168</sup> The total amount of Iran's trade with India is rather difficult to quantify; to use Malcolm's figures for a century after the period which interests us here, it represented some 22.5 percent of Iran's foreign trade. This is close to the Ottoman Empire's 26 percent, though two important differences existed: the

<sup>164</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 489. John Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, "Commercial State of Persia," pp. 262-267 in Charles Issawi, *EHI*.

<sup>165</sup> Bell is cited in Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 475.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 470.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 448-49.

<sup>168</sup> Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, II, 163; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 483.

trade was much more for consumption than further transit elsewhere, and a decided trade imbalance obtained in India's favor, though again, by how much is hard to say (in 1801 Malcolm put Iran's exports at 1,500,000 rupees of goods and a like amount in specie, a 150,000 pounds sterling trade deficit).<sup>169</sup>

Relations with the Central Asian Uzbek khanates improved somewhat in the seventeenth century. Peace was made with Khwarazm in 1630, and despite small-scale Uzbek raids in Khorasan throughout the century, after 1650 there were few real problems in the relationship with the Safavids.<sup>170</sup> An Uzbek embassy reached Isfahan in 1664.<sup>171</sup> As earlier in the century, Uzbek exports to Iran included lapis lazuli and rhubarb from Balkh and Bokhara, as well as peaches, apricots and apples from Samarqand. Such Iranian goods as wool, horses, pottery, carpets and leather work were gathered at Mashhad for trade with Central Asia, and, judging from Malcolm's 1801 report, the balance on this overall small-scale trade was somewhat in Iran's favor.<sup>172</sup> The trade's difficulties were compounded by the hazards of travelling in Uzbek territory; Chardin reports that some Armenian merchants were killed on the way to Balkh in the 1670s, and in 1697 an English merchant at Mashhad said that the routes were blocked.<sup>173</sup>

There was also a trade with China, despite the great distances involved. Ferrier cites an EIC estimate from early in the seventeenth century that implies that 100 tons of porcelain either came from China or could be sold in Iran; probably the latter is meant. Other Chinese goods sold in Iran included ginger, camphor and "China roots." Also, a "brief exchange of trade" occurred with Siam (Thailand) which sent logwood used for dyeing in the 1660s—this most likely involved an embassy.<sup>174</sup> On the whole, Iran's trade with these regions must have been smaller and even more intermittent than that with the Uzbeks.

<sup>169</sup> Malcolm, "Commercial State of Persia," 263-64.

<sup>170</sup> Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 286, 287, 289, 308-09.

<sup>171</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 159, based on Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse* (1930 edition), 99-101.

<sup>172</sup> Malcolm, "Commercial State of Persia," 265; Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, 31; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 474-75.

<sup>173</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 159, citing Chardin, *Voyages*, VIII, 176; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 475.

<sup>174</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 449, 471.

### I.B.5. Conclusions on External Social Change

In Chapter Two we saw that sustained commercial contact with Europe had just begun in the 1620s. Both Lockhart and Ferrier conclude that the patterns of trade and foreign relations established then were maintained intact through 1722.<sup>175</sup> Iran's average annual exports in the seventeenth century, based mainly on silk, have been estimated at 1-2 million pounds sterling.<sup>176</sup> To put this into global perspective, England (and Wales) with a total population roughly equal to Iran's, had exports of 5,000,000 pounds sterling in 1688, and France, with two to three times the population, had exports of 4,800,000 pounds sterling in 1715.<sup>177</sup>

The key changes which occurred between 1630 and 1720 had mainly to do with the silk trade. The collapse of the royal monopoly in 1630 undoubtedly shifted the profit shares in favor of Armenian middlemen at the Safavids' expense. Silk production seems to have risen from 1620 to 1670: an English estimate of 1620 is that 1,350,000 lbs. were exported to Europe, while Olearius put the total crop in the mid-1630s at 4,300,000 lbs. and Chardin in 1670 put it at 6,072,000 lbs.<sup>178</sup> These are all guesses, however, and a plausible counter-guess on my part would be that by 1670 the export of silk reached a peak and may thereafter have declined through 1720.<sup>179</sup> It will be recalled that the East India companies found a cheaper source of silk in Bengal by 1650; this led to a drop in demand in the Persian Gulf. Though the Armenians continued to ply the overland routes, the price in Europe fell, which must have had an impact on their abilities to sell Iran's silk in the Levant. Another disquieting trend to which these developments contributed was Iran's balance of payments, which turned increasingly unfavorable: as less silk was sold, and wool failed to make up the difference, it became necessary to spend more and more cash for the spices the Dutch brought from

<sup>175</sup> Lockhart, "European Contacts with Persia, 1350-1736," 197.

<sup>176</sup> Issawi suggests 1-2 million pounds sterling: *EHI*, 12; Ferrier estimates 1,750,000 pounds in exports, or 3 million pounds in total trade: "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 489-90.

<sup>177</sup> Issawi, *Ibid.* Ferrier put England at six million pounds sterling: *ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Figures compiled by Issawi, *EHI*, 12. Ferrier has a comparable set of estimates: 125 tons in 1618, 192 tons in 1636 and 270 tons in the 1670s: "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 478. On page 457 Ferrier suggests that Olearius's estimate was 3,834,000 lbs. (18,000 bales of 213 lbs. each). He mistakenly says this is 192 tons, when in fact it is 1,917; likewise, his figure on Chardin should read 3,036 tons, not 270.

<sup>179</sup> Lockhart, citing a Russian source, notes a possible drop by half in the silk exports of Gilan from 1670 to 1720, though he puzzlingly concludes that total production may have stayed the same: *The Fall of the Safavī Dynasty*, 238 note 2.

Asia. The internal consequences of this will be looked at more closely in the next section.

The overall qualitative impact of these relations on the Iranian social structure was probably fairly slight. The expansion of Kirman wool production did lead to local increases in the domestic weaving industry, as we saw. With much or most of the country's silk production going abroad, there would logically have been some loss in potential silk manufactures for internal use. However, there was no major re-orientation of the economy for exports, and no significant dependence on any imports, except for pepper and sugar, which were consumed by some urban classes but not yet the mass of the population.

The conclusion drawn here is that Iran in the seventeenth century remained a world-empire in the external arena of the world-economy. The internal economy and social structure possessed its own strong dynamic, with limited (if growing) external relations with both neighboring world-empires (Russia, the Ottomans and Mughals) and emerging European core countries (Holland and England) that did not much disrupt it. There was certainly no *dependency* of Iran on the West in the seventeenth century. But the long period in the external arena did herald the beginnings of a gradual, relative decline vis-a-vis an expanding Europe. In the seventeenth century the Middle Eastern states of the Safavids and Ottomans were far too strong to be colonized and dominated by the core, and yet too weak to compete with Europe in the new peripheries of Asia, southeast Asia, and Africa, not to mention Latin America. Thus the Middle East merely held its ground (which in Western eyes has since been invariably labelled a "decline"), unable to function as either core or periphery of the emerging world-economy.

### **I.C. Secular Trends in the Seventeenth-Century Safavid Political Economy**

It is now time to try to pull together the strands of internal developments and external relations and ascertain what were the principal long-term political economic trends in seventeenth-century Iran. This will be done under two headings—first, the empirical evidence pointing to a balance of payments deficit and an inflationary dynamic, and secondly, the growing fiscal problems of the Safavid state and their impact on the social formation by the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century.

Consideration of these economic problems is the new analytic step needed to put the fall of the dynasty fully into perspective.

### **I.C.1. Balance of Payments Deficit and Inflation**

The issue of Iran's balance of payments has been alluded to time and again in piecemeal fashion when discussing relations with the several European countries and Asian empires above. Iran's case was part of a world-wide trend: beginning in the sixteenth century and continuing into the seventeenth, there was a steady flow of silver, and to a lesser degree, gold, from Latin American mines into Spain, where it was diffused throughout Europe and then carried by the East India fleets into Asia. From Asia to the West, the reverse trade routes tended to carry valuable commodities—silk and spices above all. Iran was known as a "silver area" in the world-economy, in that the most common coins in use (after copper) were silver. Gold coins nevertheless did stream into Iran, including the Venetian ducat or sequin, the Florentine gulden, German crowns, Hungarian ducats, Russian rijks dollars, Spanish reals and piastres, and gold and silver bars from England, Turkey and elsewhere. The question that arises is what was Iran's overall balance of trade?<sup>180</sup>

A qualitative answer, at best, can be attempted. The export of Iran's vast silk production drew specie into the country. How much is difficult to say; Ferrier estimates the value of an average year's silk exports at perhaps 1,750,000 pounds sterling, with wide fluctuations.<sup>181</sup> In the sixteenth century most of this silk may have been paid for with cash, but with the growth of English cloth and Dutch spice exports in the seventeenth, much less would have been paid for in this manner.<sup>182</sup> The English EIC exported to all of Asia the enormous sum in silver with some in gold of 15,486,187 pounds sterling between 1659/60 and 1719/20, an average of 281,703 pounds for the 55 years that figures are available (the yearly average increased from 238,559 pounds for 1659/60-1687/88 to

<sup>180</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 183, 463-66, 568-69, 1172; Fragner, "Social and Internal Economic Affairs," 562-63; *Three Reports of the Select Committee Appointed by the Court of Directors* (London, n.d. [ca. 1792]), pp. 85-89 in Issawi, *EHI*, 88; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 469, 485.

<sup>181</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 489.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 433, on the sixteenth century, citing Sir Anthony Jenkinson, *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia* by Anthony Jenkinson, edited by E. Delmar Morgan and C. H. Coote, two volumes (London: Hakluyt Society, 1st series, volume 72, 1886), II, 411.

329,537 pounds for 1691/92-1719/20).<sup>183</sup> But much of this must have gone to Mughal India, with only a portion, which we cannot quantify, entering Iran. The other major source of inflow was the Levant, both from the Ottomans themselves and the European companies there. The amounts were great enough, in Inalcik's view, that "In Persia, the currency in circulation was kept supplied by gold and silver earned in the Ottoman markets."<sup>184</sup> The amounts most likely increased after the Ottoman wars and prohibitions of the sixteenth century gave way to more peaceful relations in the seventeenth, but again the figures are simply unknown.

The money obtained by a favorable balance in the silk trade with the West then flowed to the East, as spices, drugs and cotton goods were imported and had to be paid for in part with cash. The main sources which drained specie away from Iran were the Dutch and the Indians. The Dutch, in Fryer's famous words, "carry off ... many Tunn of Gold and Silver, Yearly."<sup>185</sup> This they did by supplying Iran with expensive spices from their Asian trade. And since Mughal India had no need for the raw silk of Iran, the cotton and other textile goods it exported had to be paid for with cash. Chardin, moreover, calls the Indian moneylenders at Isfahan "true bloodsuckers [who] draw all the gold and silver out of the country and send it to their own."<sup>186</sup> Thus could du Mans in 1660 compare Iran to a caravanserai with two gates passing coins from Turkey to India, and conclude that "the wealth of Persia is only like the humidity of water which attaches itself to the channels it passes through into its basin ... little remains in the country."<sup>187</sup> Concrete evidence of this is the Dutch cargo worth 988,000 florins that left Bandar 'Abbas for Ceylon and Surat in 1697/98, of which 88.5 percent consisted of European gold ducats.<sup>188</sup> The result inside Iran was the lack of money in

<sup>183</sup> Chaudhuri, "Treasure and Trade Balances," 497-98, Appendix, Table 1. The missing years are 1688/9-1690/1 and 1702/3-1704/5.

<sup>184</sup> Halil Inalcik, "Bursa and the Commerce of the Levant," pp. 131-147 in *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, volume III (1960), cited by Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 471.

<sup>185</sup> Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, II, 163. Though the Dutch could also bring in specie on occasion, as at Bandar 'Abbas in 1653, more than six million Spanish reals, prompting Father Barnabas of Basra to note: "From what I see, all the money of the West Indies is coming to these East Indies": *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 360.

<sup>186</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, IV, 64, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 19. Likewise the EIC remarked in 1631 on the "Silver and Gould which is transported yearly from hence into India in great quantities by merchaunts of these parts": cited by Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 484.

<sup>187</sup> Du Mans, *Estat de la Perse*, 192-93; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 279.

<sup>188</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740*, 67.

circulation commented on in the later seventeenth century by Chardin and Thévenot; this shortage was compounded by royal hoarding, Chardin referring to the Treasury as "a bottomless pit (*un vrai gouffre*), for all is lost there and but little comes out."<sup>189</sup>

Judging from such evidence we may cautiously infer that the balance of trade was on the whole negative by the latter decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>190</sup> In the overall pattern of world trade, then, Iran fit neither the classic European core or Asian periphery role—it bought Asian products (like the Europeans) and sold its own silk (like the Asians), but it was the European companies who profited twice on these transactions for they brought the silk to market in Europe and the spices to market in Iran, adding costs to the latter and deducting profits from the former. Iran was as much a short-circuit as a conduit in this trade, from the European point of view.

While large-scale commerce with the Dutch and India drained currency away from Iran, the continued overland silk trade exposed Iran to the Ottoman Empire's inflation problems. The latter were part of another world-wide trend. In Europe, the last quarter of the sixteenth century had seen a three- to fourfold increase in prices for goods and services compared with 1500. Originating in western Europe, inflation spread to Italy and central Europe, and then, by the 1580s, to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>191</sup> Omer Lutfi Barkan has created a price index based on foodstuffs purchased for religious foundations in Istanbul showing a rise from a base of 100 in 1489/90 to 182.49 in 1585/86 and then a huge jump by 1604 to 472.79.<sup>192</sup> Table 3.2 presents another of Barkan's indices in which he corrects for the devaluations of the currency that accompanied and exacerbated the Ottoman price revolution.<sup>193</sup> Braudel dates the Ottoman inflation from the great devaluation of 1584, and considers it was rather severe right through the 1660s at least.<sup>194</sup> Its impact on the Ottoman Empire included

<sup>189</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 429. On the lack of money in circulation, Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 279, cites Thévenot and Chardin.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. Saleh's opinion that there was "a substantial inflow of gold and silver coins, a phenomenon which continued until sometime in the mid 17th century": "Social Formations in Iran," 99, based on Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, but giving no page.

<sup>191</sup> Omer Lutfi Barkan, "The Price Revolution of the Sixteenth Century: A Turning Point in the Economic History of the Near East," translated by Justin McCarthy, pp. 3-28 in *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 6, number 1 (January 1975), 8-9, based on Braudel, *The Mediterranean*.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Table 3.2  
Food Price Index in the Ottoman Empire, 1489-1655

Year	Food Price Index
1489/90	100.00
1555/56	135.41
1596/97	266.20
1632/33	201.00
1655/56	184.02

Source: Barkan, "The Sixteenth Century Price Revolution," 11.

an impetus to the emergence of a "colonial" trade pattern (Ottoman raw materials for European manufactures), and a vicious fiscal cycle in which the government, as largest buyer of goods, went into deficit, leading to devaluations and higher prices, while new taxes reduced domestic production, as did the European purchases and products.<sup>195</sup> Europeans trading in the Ottoman Empire could buy goods with cheap silver, or they could buy cheap silver with gold and then buy goods more cheaply with the silver. Both gold and silver were "worth more" in the Ottoman Empire (i.e. Ottoman gold and silver bought less than European specie).<sup>196</sup> Roger Olson argues that after 1584 the Ottomans sought to dispose of their debased silver in Iran with initially rather serious effects, but that Iranian merchants soon (by 1600?) became informed and demanded higher prices for their silk in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>197</sup> Iran, as noted above, sent its own surplus coin on to India, by which point the price revolution "caused less economic disturbance than annual fluctuations."<sup>198</sup>

How much inflation did Iran, midway geographically and commercially between the Ottoman and Mughal empires, in fact experience? Emerson notes that due to the scarcity of coins the prices

<sup>194</sup> Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 539-41.

<sup>195</sup> Robert W. Olson, "The Sixteenth Century 'Price Revolution' and its Effect on the Ottoman Empire and on Ottoman-Safavid Relations," pp. 45-55 in *Acta Orientalia*, volume XXXVII (Copenhagen, 1976), 49-51.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 54 note 20, based on Irfan Habib, "Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India," in *Journal of Economic History*, volume XXIX (March 1969), 75-76. Chaudhuri reinforces this point on the relative mildness of the inflation in India: "... the current concept of India acting as an unlimited reservoir of silver in the structure of world trade before the age of the Industrial Revolution may need drastic revision. The role of silver in the economic life of India was fundamentally determined by the same type of considerations as elsewhere": "Treasure and Trade Balances," 490.

of foreign goods were falling, which would imply a strengthening of Iran's currency.<sup>199</sup> Nevertheless, there is ample evidence of a certain amount of internal inflation. Safavid currency had generally high standards of weight and fineness through the time of Shah 'Abbas and beyond.<sup>200</sup> But in 1677 Chardin remarked "The money itself has been altered. One no longer encounters good coins."<sup>201</sup> By 1684, most of the coins in circulation were seriously debased; the bazaars at Isfahan were closed and new money was ordered minted.<sup>202</sup> Fragner has constructed a table showing the approximate gold value of one tuman in the Safavid period (see Table 3.3).<sup>203</sup>

Table 3.3  
Value of the Tuman, 1510-1718

Year	Gold Value of One Tuman Expressed in German Gold Marks of 1913
1510	270.0
1522	195.0
1530	165.0
1550	133.0
1577	162.0
1580	129.0
1593	100.0
1622	83.0
1660	77.0
1680	69.0
1711	63.5
1718	63.5

Source: Fragner, Hinz—see note 203.

This table would appear to show the effects of the Ottoman inflation from 1550 to 1622, as well as a steady later internal inflation after 'Abbas's death (the decline from 1510 to 1530 I cannot account for; it continued a sharp drop from the pre-Safavid fifteenth century). Other evidence from *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia* and Krusinski suggests that the tuman was stable relative to

<sup>199</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 279.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 296, based on H. L. Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals and Seals of the Shāhs of Irān, 1500-1941* (Hertford, England: S. Austin and Sons, Ltd., 1945); Fragner, "Social and Internal Economic Affairs," 556.

<sup>201</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 292.

<sup>202</sup> Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 485; Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 27 note 3.

<sup>203</sup> The table constructed by Fragner, "Social and Internal Economic Affairs," 566, is based on the research of Walther Hinz, "The Value of the Toman in the Middle Ages," pp. 90-95 in Mojtaba Minovi and Iraj Afshar, editors, *Yad-Nameh-yi Irāni-yi Minorsky* (Tehran: Publications of Tehran University, 1969).

Italian, French, English and Spanish currencies till the 1670s, then appreciated by about 33 percent by the 1690s or 1700s.<sup>204</sup> Another kind of inflation is alleged by Krusinski to have occurred due to the frequent changing of provincial intendants. Since they minted the local copper currency in their own name, these coins fell by half in value each time a new governor was appointed. They were also worth only half as much outside their region of origin.<sup>205</sup>

Prices on the few commodities for which we have even roughly comparable information suggest a generally rising pattern in the later seventeenth century. In an economy that was not yet "national" prices naturally varied from place to place. Chardin found Khuzistan inexpensive, with Qandahar twice as cheap and Kirman and the Gulf more costly. Tabriz (closer to the Ottoman inflation perhaps?) was considered inexpensive by Chardin and De Rhodes.<sup>206</sup> Table 3.4 provides a rough index of the long-term trends.

Table 3.4  
Prices in Safavid Iran, 1581-1716

Year/Place	Bread	Rice	Hen	Wood
1581/Isfahan	1.52 dinars/lb	10.6 dinars/lb		1.52 dinars/lb
1588-1629/Sultaniyeh			62.5 dinars	
1629-42/Isfahan	3.70 dinars/lb			
1636-38/Isfahan				.95 dinars/lb
1668/Isfahan	15.75 dinars/lb			
1667-94/Isfahan		25.0 dinars/lb	75.0 dinars	4.17-5.21 dinars/lb
1716/Isfahan				5.36 dinars/lb

Source: Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 119-20. Calculations, with corrections, mine.

It should be noted that the price of bread at Isfahan in 1668 is anomalous; there had been a bad harvest in 1666 followed by an outbreak of famine and disease.<sup>207</sup> The table, incomplete as it is, shows a steady rise in prices of major foodstuffs and wood in the course of the seventeenth century,

<sup>204</sup> A *Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 775-76; Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, xvii-xix. To calculate the true value of the tuman vis-a-vis these currencies one would want to know the rate of inflation in Europe, which had been fairly high a century earlier.

<sup>205</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 89; Fragner, "Social and Internal Economic Affairs," 562-63.

<sup>206</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 292-93; Emerson cites Chardin and De Rhodes on Tabriz, "Ex Occidente Lux," 279-80.

<sup>207</sup> Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 281, based on Chardin, *Voyages*, X, 1-8; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 305-6.

confirmed by such European observers as Struys in 1672, Father John Baptist at Shiraz in 1678, Sanson in 1683 and Bell in 1715-18, as well as the Ottoman envoy Durri Effendi in 1719.<sup>208</sup>

To reconcile these two major negative trends—a drain of currency from the imbalance of foreign trade and an internal rise in prices—is not a simple matter. Logically the first should have caused prices to fall by increasing the demand for coins. The only hint of a mutual resolution of these counteracting trends is the fact that Indian moneylenders, Armenian merchants and the Safavid state itself took the best coins either out of the country or out of circulation, leaving the least fine and thus debasing the currency that circulated internally. Other explanations may be necessary. What seems to be the case empirically is both that good currency was hard to find, resulting in an undermonetarized economy that limited overall trade, *and* that prices rose, with inevitably negative consequences for the urban poor and those living on fixed incomes, a group which included some, perhaps many, who worked for the Safavid state, including holders of *suyurghals* and other tax benefits and those paid in lump sums rather than a percentage of the land revenues.<sup>209</sup> In a society with little waged labor, inflation seems most likely to harm those who had no product to sell or those whose income could not be raised to compensate; thus the urban poor and marginal populations undoubtedly suffered more than merchants, artisans or state officials. Peasants paying a fixed portion of their crop and living in a subsistence economy, probably were not too badly affected, and tribespeople even less.

<sup>208</sup> Father John Baptist found that in 1678 things cost four to five times what they had previously (this sounds like a conjunctural crisis): *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 445. Durri Effendi found that prices in general were twice those in the Ottoman Empire in 1719 due to a dearth of agricultural workers: cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 125. Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 120-21, cites John Struys, *Voyages and Travels of John Struys through Italy, Greece, Muscovy, Tartary, Media, Persia* ..., translated by J. Morrison (London, 1684), 324; Père Nicolas Sanson, *Voyages ou relation de l'état présent du royaume de Perse* (Paris, 1695), 159; and John Bell, *Travels from St. Petersburg to diverse parts of Asia*, two volumes (Glasgow, 1763), I, 121-22.

<sup>209</sup> Olson makes this point with respect to the impact of inflation in the Ottoman Empire: "The Sixteenth Century 'Price Revolution'," 48. Fragner notes that the powerful protected themselves against inflation precisely by forcing share-cropping agreements to be expressed as a percentage of the crop: "Social and Internal Economic Affairs," 520-21; see also 509.

### **I.C.2. Fiscal Crisis**

Whatever their ultimate explanation, both these trends contributed to what we shall now characterize as the fiscal crisis of the Safavid political economy. The conversion of state land to crown land discussed above, was certainly designed to raise revenues for the Safavid state. Tentatively begun in the 1630s, the process accelerated from 1642 to 1666. Could it have been a response to incipient fiscal crisis rather than a mere stratagem to increase the vast income of an absolutist state? The data considered in Chapter Two showed state revenues of 783,862 tumans with expenditures of only 625,320, leaving a very healthy surplus of 158,532 tumans. These were figures for 1722, however, long after the conversion process was over, and they are, moreover, very incomplete. In the 1670s, Chardin, who was admittedly only guessing, posited revenues of 700,000 tumans (32 million livres) against expenditures of 744,000 (34 million livres); he, certainly, had some sense that there was a deficit to be taken into account. Could a fiscal crisis then have emerged between 1630 and the 1670s?

Roemer's account of the Safavid period provides some hints of a growing shortfall of state funds by the mid-seventeenth century. Under Mirza Muhammad Taqi, the Grand Vazir from 1634 to 1645 (known as Saru Taqi, it was he who prompted Shah 'Abbas II to convert Fars into crown land), "Efficient administrative measures, especially in finance, enabled him to raise revenues to a level never before known in Iran."<sup>210</sup> Known for his integrity, he used a system of spies to crack down on corruption, which led to a murder plot against him that succeeded on October 11, 1645. The Grand Vazir from 1653 to 1661 was a Tabriz Armenian named Muhammad Beg, who as overseer of the royal workshops had acquired a reputation as a competent fiscal agent.

The problems he was required to solve, however, were beyond his capabilities. He did not succeed in reducing the immoderate outlay on the court and the high military expenditure as the situation demanded, not even by taking the necessary measures to reduce the quality of the coinage, attempting to foster mining, and further increasing the crown lands.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 282.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

Thus it would appear that despite a height in revenue collection during the 1640s, a deficit had arisen only a decade later, and that, moreover, the expansion of crown lands was by then part of a set of desperate stop-gap measures designed to reverse the trend. When Chardin left Iran in 1677 he reflected on the changes between his first journey in 1665 and the present: "Wealth seemed diminished by one-half, from one time to the next, in this period of only twelve years..."<sup>212</sup>

Two principal causes of fiscal crisis were the large outlays on the army and the harem. The extension of crown lands, and elimination of provincial governors, it will be recalled, were in part an effort to reduce the expense of the military. Minorsky puts expenditure on the regular army in 1722 at only 10.5 percent of the total, but this covers only the salaries of the four corps commanders; another 56 percent went to provincial governors serving a military function. Chardin felt that the army accounted for 38.2 percent of total spending in the 1670s.<sup>213</sup> While this component of the state's expenditures was rather high, it was perhaps stable in the period under consideration. Such was not the case with the harem. Chardin put the harem at 11.8 percent of total spending in the 1670s, with the royal family and its attendants at another 29.4 percent (some 4 and 10 million francs, respectively, out of 34 million in all). When Sultan Husayn came to the throne in 1694 the harem grew to huge proportions; one chronicler says there were 500 wives and daughters in the royal family and some 4500 slave girls (*kanīz*).<sup>214</sup> Krusinski writes of the harem that its "Expences ... swallowed up the Greatest Part of his Finances" and that he had "trebled the Expence of it to what it was in the Time of his Predecessors." A pilgrimage to Mashhad in 1706-08 included the entire harem and some 60,000 men, "which not only compleatly drein'd his Exchequer, but also ruin'd all the Provinces through which he pass'd."<sup>215</sup> Sultan Husayn exacerbated these expenses with a penchant for building as well—palaces, pleasure gardens, mosques and hospitals—"... in which he buried immense Sums, and even exhausted the Treasures of the Kings that had reign'd before him."<sup>216</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 292.

<sup>213</sup> These data were presented in Chapter Two, based on Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 155, 105-09; Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 498.

<sup>214</sup> Muhammad Hashim Asaf, *Rustam al-tawarikh*, edited by M. Mushiri (Tehran, 1352/1973), 107-08, cited by Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 189.

<sup>215</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 119, 124, 127.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 125, 135; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 48.

Given these fiscal pressures, the last two Safavid shahs resorted to the sale of offices and a limited amount of tax-farming. Tax-farming on the scale of the absolutist states of Europe did not occur. Chardin in fact comments that its absence in Iran provided a certain relief from excessive taxes since when the harvest was poor, the taxes declined in proportion; Minorsky notes perceptively that tax-farming presupposes a more highly monetarized economy than that of Safavid Iran.<sup>217</sup> In 1674, however, Shah Solayman began to farm the customs at Bandar 'Abbas, which had fallen from 1,100,000 livres in the time of 'Abbas II to 4-500,000 in the early 1670s, due to fraud. The chief customs officer (*shahbandar*) thus went from being a salaried post to one that "cost" its occupant some 1,200,000 livres (24,000 tumans) for the privilege to keep the customs receipts.<sup>218</sup> Krusinski confirms that under Solayman and Sultan Husayn, "Offices were disposed of, not to the most deserving, but to the highest bidder." Though their offices were expensive to acquire, the provincial "appointees" used the pretext of having to provide "presents" to the court to raise "ten Times as much upon the People." Those below the new officer used the excuse of providing receptions for him to lay "extraordinary Contributions" on the population, themselves gaining "six Times as much by it." All of this is contrasted by Krusinski to the former practices of appointment by merit, and for life unless one committed serious abuses.<sup>219</sup> An eighteenth-century chronicle describes Sultan Husayn's stay at Qazvin in 1719, criticizing those courtiers who "began to sell offices and take contracts."<sup>220</sup>

The inevitable result of such state responses to fiscal crisis was economic hardship for the population. Chardin notes that by 1677, "The impoverished great men everywhere scorched the people, to keep up their standard of living."<sup>221</sup> Krusinski writes of provincial extortion a generation later:

<sup>217</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 407; Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 27.

<sup>218</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, V, 403-04; VIII, 519; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 487.

<sup>219</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 84-88.

<sup>220</sup> Muhammad Muhsin, *Zubdat al-tavarikh*, f. 205a, cited by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 176.

<sup>221</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 292.

... every Governor ... hasten'd to fill his Purse, that he might have wherewithal to purchase a new Palace, or to defend himself against any Prosecution he had to apprehend for his Oppressions, the whole at the Expende of the poor People, who were fleeced in all Respects by those too frequent Alterations...

... the People had a great deal to suffer under Governors who regarded their Post no more than a Place to bait at, made it more their Study to pillage the Cities and Provinces, than to keep up good Order; and this they did with the less Caution and Reserve, because they were very sensible that they might do it with Impunity.<sup>222</sup>

Corruption and bribery in high places caused excessive taxes to be levied, leading to less well-off peasants and urban populations. Some peasants fled their land, becoming nomadic pastoralists or bandits. Public safety on the roads, so secure in 'Abbas I's time, and even in the 1670s, according to Tavernier, broke down under Sultan Husayn, as highway robbers and peasants plundered travellers, and recourse to the local authorities, often alleged to work together with highwaymen, no longer led to the replacement of stolen goods or their value.<sup>223</sup> Famines broke out in Isfahan itself in 1666/7 and 1707 (the latter leading to a revolt), and the situation was such in 1717 that a German soldier described widespread poverty there:

Bread was so scarce that the poor people used to devour dead camels, horses and mules. Once, when a horse died in the Dutch compound, its body was thrown into the street; within an hour, all the flesh had been picked from its bones.<sup>224</sup>

Such conditions may not have been the rule at all times in all parts of Safavid Iran, but that they were acute at least three times in the capital over fifty years gives some idea of the impact of the trends discussed here.

My contention is that the tendency of all these diverse trends leads in the same negative direction, and that their sum is one of definite economic deterioration at all levels of society. The drain of currency and decline in the terms of trade for silk hurt the merchant classes (and the ulama who depended on their contributions). Military and harem expenditures led to fiscal crisis at the apex of the state, and undermined the Safavid family and the vast numbers of courtiers and others it supported. In turn this unleashed new abuses such as sale of offices, corruption and higher taxes. These

<sup>222</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 100, 104; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 44; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 307.

<sup>223</sup> Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 113-19; Emerson, "Ex Occidente Lux," 218.

<sup>224</sup> This soldier, named Worms, accompanied the Dutch envoy Ketelaar in 1717, and is cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 107 note 2.

hurt the whole population, especially the peasantry and urban working classes, who were further hard-pressed by the rise in prices which impacted most on the urban poor. By the turn of the eighteenth century the flourishing political economy of Shah 'Abbas and his immediate successors appears to have been lurching into a crisis whose strands were woven into the entire social formation.

## II. The Long Fall of the Safavids

In this section an assessment will be made of the various theories that have been advanced to explain the fall of the Safavid dynasty in 1722. My own explanation, many of whose contours have already been traced, will then be introduced. Finally, the main events will be chronicled, detailing the principal conjunctural factors which played a role. On all three levels it becomes apparent that the task is to describe not a single event—the actual taking of Isfahan by a smallish invading army of Afghan tribesmen—but rather a *process* of decline and crisis extending over half a century and more.

### II.A. Theories on the Fall of the Safavids

A great many historians and observers have recognized that decline set in well before the fall. The first of these, Chardin, noted already in the 1670s that the reign of 'Abbas I had been a pinnacle from which decline seemed inevitable: "Once this great and good prince had ceased to live, Persia ceased to prosper."<sup>225</sup> In this judgment Savory has concurred, calling the whole period from 1629 to 1722 one of "gradual but continuous decline," though he acknowledges that 'Abbas II from 1642 to 1666, checked, but did not stop the reverse.<sup>226</sup> E. G. Browne considers the solidity of 'Abbas's system to have allowed it a nearly hundred-year period of "outward prosperity," comparable to the story of Solomon who died standing, supported by his staff, while the Jinn kept working on the Temple for another year until the woodworm ate through the staff.<sup>227</sup> Du Cerceau, writing in the 1730s,

<sup>225</sup> Chardin, *Voyages*, III, 291.

<sup>226</sup> Savory, "The Safavid Administrative System," 367; Savory, "Safavid Persia," 423, 427.

<sup>227</sup> E. G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature in Modern Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 111, cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 16. This volume has also been issued as *A Literary History of Persia*, volume IV, *Modern Times (1500-1924)* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1953).

was perhaps the first to pinpoint the accession of Solayman in 1666 as an irreversible turning point: "It was under this Prince, that *Persia* began to decay."<sup>228</sup> The mid-nineteenth century Iranian historian Reza Quli Khan Hidayat spoke of dynasties going through phases of youth, adolescence and old age, such that by Sultan Husayn's assumption of the throne in 1694, "the signs of decline [inhiṭāt], nay, rather, of extinction [inqirād] of the life of the dynasty became from day to day [more] manifest."<sup>229</sup> This view too of an accelerated decline after 1694 has generally found acceptance. All of these writers have noted perceptively that the fall was long in coming; my only comment would be that while 1629 is certainly early to date the decline from, the reign of 'Abbas II in the 1650s and 1660s deserves more attention that it has hitherto been given, as historians have been too impressed by his military exploits at Qandahar in 1648 to notice the fiscal crisis tendencies that started to be felt around mid-century, as noted above. The main point is the general consensus that we are dealing with a protracted process; this throws into relief the various *causes* of the decline and fall of the Safavids.

Vladimir Minorsky's classic theses on "the more conspicuous factors" among the causes of decline are worth quoting in full, since they have to date proved largely unsurpassable by subsequent historians of the period. He notes:

- (a) The complete disappearance of the basic theocratic nucleus round which Shah Ismā'īl had built up his state, without the substitution of some other dynamic ideology.
- (b) Great opposition between the old and the new elements in the Persian military class.
- (c) The disturbance of the equilibrium between the *mamālik* and *khāṣṣa*, the expansion of the latter having diminished the interest of the service classes in the cause which they were supporting.
- (d) The irresponsible character of the 'shadow government' represented by the harem, the Queen Mother and the eunuchs.
- (e) The degeneration of the dynasty whose scions were brought up in the atmosphere of the harem, in complete ignorance of the outside world.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>228</sup> Du Cerceau, introduction to Krusinski's *A History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 57. Roemer concurs with this assessment, "The Safavid Period," 304, as does Savory, "Safavid Persia," 424, and *Iran under the Safavids*, 232.

<sup>229</sup> Riḍā Qulī Khān "Hidāyat", *Rauḍat al-Ṣafā-yi-Nāsiri*, volume VIII (Tehran, 1853-56), n.p., cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavi Dynasty*, 17.

<sup>230</sup> Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 23.

Laurence Lockhart, author of the standard history of the events of this period—*The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*—essentially limits himself to a commentary on Minorsky's ideas, agreeing with each and stressing the conversion of state to crown provinces and the personal shortcomings of the last two shahs.<sup>231</sup> Roger Savory, another leading scholar on Safavid Iran, reduces his explanation to the same two or three factors.<sup>232</sup> In one passage he formulates a set of unsurmountable contradictions behind which Minorsky's list re-emerges:

The Safavids went down to defeat ultimately because they failed to reconcile the irreconcilable: Turk and Persian; tribal organisation and urbanism; the pastoral-nomadic tradition and the sedentary life of the agriculturalist; revolutionary sufism and dogmatic Shi'ism; theocracy and the complex bureaucracy required by an expanding empire; the "men of the sword" and the "men of the pen"; the claim of the mujtahids to constitute the only legitimate form of government in an Ithnā'asharī Shī'ī state, and the imperatives of a multi-cultural state.<sup>233</sup>

The list is to be sure of interest, but it is not really elaborated upon.

A much smaller group of scholars have suggested that factors other than the standard ones may have played a role. Hodgson, in *The Venture of Islam*, notes that Safavid absolutism, later in developing than either the Ottoman or Mughals versions, was the first to fall. Under 'Abbas there was "a great concentration of wealth at the centre," in which civilian power cut into military resources without being diffused to the underlying population in economic terms. This concentration of wealth at Isfahan reduced flexibility and proved disastrous in 1722.<sup>234</sup> Nikki Keddie's 1955 dissertation mentions a set of economic factors, including worsened conditions for the peasantry, loss of court revenues due to decreased artisanal activities and less prosperous towns, and a decline in the silk trade which she feels by 1700 was down five times from its peak.<sup>235</sup> In her 1981 interpretive

<sup>231</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 17-33. He has been criticized for doing "little more than to tautologize on the ideological, social and economic aspects of Professor Minorsky's famous theses on the causes of the decline, and to emphasize instead the alleged moral degeneration of the dynasty in terms of debauching, harem intrigue and the persecution of the minority religious and ethnic units": Martin B. Dickson, "The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty" (a review article on *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*), pp. 503-517 in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, volume 82 (1962), 514.

<sup>232</sup> Savory, "Safavid Persia," 423-25; "The Safavid Administrative System," 367, 368; *Iran under the Safavids*, 226.

<sup>233</sup> Savory, "The Safavid Administrative System," 371.

<sup>234</sup> Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume three, 50, 55, 56.

<sup>235</sup> Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 35-37, citing the Soviet scholars Reisner and Rubtsov on the economic evidence: I.M. Reisner and B. K. Rubtsov, editors, *Novaia Istoriia stran zarubezhnogo vostoka*, 2 volumes (Moscow, 1952), I, 87.

history of modern Iran the following factors are adduced:

Disruption by military tribes, the low level of agricultural production, and the gradual change of Western trade routes to the Far East from overland to overseas, however, contributed to economic decline, reflected in political decline, and to easy conquest by the Afghans in 1722. Frequent wars with the Ottomans also took an economic toll.<sup>236</sup>

Leonard Helfgott likewise makes an embryonic but prescient attempt to introduce the "trade revolution" as a probable factor in Safavid decline, responsible for inflation, loss of commercial power and an increased tax burden (these are all hypothesized as the lack of concrete studies is noted). He makes a case for "structural contradictions" and undermines what might be termed the "personalist explanation" condemning the degeneration of the dynasty by pointing to the French case in the eighteenth century and asking if the successors of Louis XIV could have done any better in blunting the discontent they faced.<sup>237</sup>

## **II.B. The Major Factors Involved in the Long Fall of the Safavid Dynasty: Beyond the Standard View**

There is no denying the insights of Minorsky into the Safavids' decline. In fact, in terms of the perspectives used in the present study, one might gloss them as follows:

- a) ideological weaknesses in the state ("the complete disappearance of the basic theocratic nucleus...");
- b) inter- and intra-elite political-military conflicts involving the Safavid family, Georgian officials, qizilbash chiefs and Iranian bureaucrats ("opposition between the old and new elements in the Persian military class...");
- c) an inter-elite conflict between the court and tribal chiefs over economic resources that led to a more complete absolutism but a weakened military capacity ("the disturbance of the equilibrium between the *mamālik* and *khāṣṣa* ...");
- d) intra-elite factional conflict ("the irresponsible character of the "shadow government" ...");
- e) structural (as much as personal) deterioration of the shahs' ability to direct the whole system ("the degeneration of the dynasty...").

Such a "translation" shows the continuing relevance of the standard explanation in light of new theories. But it still does not provide a coherent, unified account, one which conceptualizes the fall

<sup>236</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 13.

<sup>237</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 47, 59-65.

of the dynasty in terms of simultaneous and interrelated economic, political, military and ideological crises.

These crises are linked by the one which has till now been least explored—an economic/fiscal crisis that had military, political and ideological effects. This economic crisis had largely internal causes—there is no argument to be made for the category of dependency in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—but there were two exogenous, world-system factors at work, namely, balance of trade deficit and inflation. There were also regional military pressures by 1715-20 emanating from the Ottoman Empire, Russia and especially the Afghan tribes. Our explanation therefore draws partly on world-system analysis within the main framework of an internal political economy in crisis, and on the economic, political and ideological levels of analysis posited by the modes of production perspective.

The economic crisis has been detailed above. Far more than the alleged negative consequences of state land conversion, it involved a tale of inflation, balance of payments deficit, fiscal crisis of the state, tax-farming of the customs and sale of offices, corruption and growing tax exploitation of the population. The military impact came by the destruction of the tribal armies through the replacement of qizilbash provincial governors by state-appointed intendants, often Georgians, which led to the dismantling of the old-style tribal cavalries. If this had been compensated with increased spending by the state on the standing army there would have been little problem. But caught in a budget deficit and at peace with their powerful Ottoman neighbors, the later Safavid shahs allowed themselves to be convinced by the private harem council to save money by not spending it on the central army. The only competent military forces after 1700 were Georgian-led contingents, and we shall see that neither they, nor any tribal provincial forces would rally to the side of the Safavids in their hour of need.

The political deterioration too we have seen. The rise of faction-ridden new groups to power at court—the eunuchs, shah's harem and the ulama—proved a disaster for the making of coherent state policy when coupled with the bringing up of the royal princes in the highly artificial and sheltered atmosphere of the harem. Among the ill-consequences of fractious councillors and divided counsels

were the unpreparedness of the army, the undermining due to jealous rivalries of Georgian military and civil officers in the state, the frequent replacement by bribery and personal animosity of provincial governors which exacerbated economic exploitation, and general self-seeking on the part of the highest and most influential Safavid courtiers at the country's expense.

On the ideological plane, the rise to influence of the ulama over Sultan Husayn likewise had grave repercussions. Persecution of Armenian and Hindu merchants harmed the economy, and compelling Jews and Zoroastrians to convert to Islam caused many of the latter to flee to Kirman where in 1719 they looked upon the Afghan invaders as liberators. Most fatefully, the anti-Sunni hostility of militant Shi'i clerics like Majlisi contributed to the alienation of the Afghans who would eventually topple the dynasty, while from 1719 on uprisings occurred in numerous border regions with non-Shi'i populations, such as Shirvan, Kurdistan, Khuzistan and Baluchistan. Though the Iranian masses were largely Shi'i by the early 1700s and there was no organized anti-Safavid position among them, they too failed conspicuously to rally to the Safavids under siege. While Shi'ism had taken firm root, it was not in the eighteenth century strong enough to hold together a disintegrating state, especially one whose leading ulama promoted so exclusive a form of it.

There were, finally, as in any historical process, some more or less conjunctural or contingent reasons for the Afghans' success in 1722, most notably the failure of the Georgians to assist Isfahan, the defeat at the Battle of Gulnabad outside the city and various bad decisions taken during the siege, all of which shall be noted in the next section.

## **II.C. The Course of Events, 1698-1722**

In 1698-99, four years after Sultan Husayn had come to the throne, Baluchi tribesmen raided Kirman, threatening Yazd and Bandar 'Abbas. These disturbances were quelled not by a qizilbash tribal chief nor by a state ghulam commander, but by Giorgi XI, a Georgian prince, with his own contingents. Between 1700 and 1703 Giorgi was made first governor of Kirman and then commander-in-chief of the Iranian army, as well as being restored as *vali* of Georgia, with his nephew Wakhtang sent to administer the region in his absence; his brother Levan became *divan-begi*

(Chief Justice) of Iran, and the latter's son Khusrau Khan was appointed *darugha* of Isfahan.<sup>238</sup> In 1704 the Baluchi attacked Qandahar, and across the empire in Kurdistan an uprising against an extortionate governor-general had to be put down.<sup>239</sup> From 1706 to 1708 occurred the shah's costly pilgrimage to Mashhad with a massive retinue; in his absence a revolt broke out in Isfahan during a famine in the summer of 1707. Crowds demanding the release and enthronement of Sultan Husayn's brother, 'Abbas, were dispersed by Khusrau Khan, sent back from Mashhad by the shah.<sup>240</sup> The spate of provincial unrest continued with an uprising against Georgia in 1706 by the Lezghi tribes in the Caucasus because their subsidy had not been reaching them from Iran, and in 1709 a revolt in nearby Shirvan led by an Iranian commander.<sup>241</sup>

A far more serious situation was developing among the Afghan tribes at Qandahar and Herat. The Ghalzais, numbering some 50,000 families or 250,000 people, were centered at Qandahar; the Abdalis, who were estimated at up to 60,000 families, had long inhabited the Qandahar area but were moved to Herat under pressure from the Ghalzais early in 'Abbas I's reign.<sup>242</sup> Both tribes had favored the Safavids over the Mughals in the seventeenth century, but when Giorgi XI was sent to Qandahar after 1704 his rough treatment of the Ghalzai population sparked an uprising led by Mir Vais, chief of the Hotaki clan and a wealthy trader with India. Arrested and sent to Isfahan, Mir Vais exploited the factional hostility he found against the Georgians there, avowing his allegiance to the Safavids and accusing Giorgi of treason.<sup>243</sup> He was allowed to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, where he obtained a *fatwa* (legal opinion) from the Sunni ulama there authorizing him "to undertake a holy war against the infidel Georgian oppressors of the Sunni True Believers of Qandahār, and their heretic Shi'ī instigators."<sup>244</sup> Sent back to Qandahar, Mir Vais and his followers surprised

<sup>238</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 46; Savory, "Safavid Persia," 425; D. M. Lang, "Georgia and the Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty," pp. 523-539 in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, volume XIV, part 3 (1952), 527.

<sup>239</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty*, 47.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 82, 85, 95-96.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 86; Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 156-58. On the mistreatment of the Ghalzais at Qandahar see Lang, "Georgia and the Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty," 530.

<sup>244</sup> Lang, "Georgia and the Fall of the Ṣafavī Dynasty," 531, based on the Georgian interpreter Joseph's account of 1723 in the French Foreign Ministry Archives. At Isfahan, Mir Vais had suffered insults as a Sunni; he brought several Shi'ī books to Mecca to make his case to the Sunni ulama: Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 290.

Giorgi outside the city in April 1709 and killed him, taking control of Qandahar. Giorgi's nephew, Khusrau Khan, was dispatched from Isfahan with 12,000 Georgians and qizilbash and besieged Qandahar in 1711; after almost forcing its surrender they had to lift the siege, and when the qizilbash detachments failed to give him full support the army was defeated while retreating and he himself killed. Another expedition dispersed when its aged commander died at Herat, and a third was beaten by the Herat Abdalis, now also in rebellion, who further defeated the forces of the governor of Mashhad. By the time of Mir Vais's death in 1715, the whole of Qandahar province was independent under the Ghalzais, and the Abdalis gained control of Herat in 1716-17. Mir Vais's eldest son Mahmud assumed leadership of the Ghalzais at this time; soon after subduing the Abdalis at Herat (and thus temporarily gaining the credulous Sultan Husayn's favor), he would begin making forays into Iran.<sup>245</sup>

The internal situation in Iran is well summed up in a report by the Capuchin Père Bernard de Bourges from Tabriz on February 26, 1713:

Persia is in extreme desolation, with no justice and each living according to his inclination and committing all the evils he can without punishment. Mir Vais advances his conquests increasingly without opposition, the Sophi [i.e., the shah] having neither the honor nor the money to oppose him, the great men all opposed to each other, and a Prince who lacks judgment, concerned only with his pleasures and making a traffic of his decrees.<sup>246</sup>

Sultan Husayn did in fact move his court to Qazvin in 1717/18 to raise troops in the northwest, but the ministers quarrelled and nothing was accomplished in the three years they spent there. By 1717-19, there were multiple signs of revolt—among the Kurds who occupied Hamadan and raided close to the Isfahan area, the Lezghis in Shirvan and then Georgia, the Muscat Arabs in the Gulf and Baluchi raids in the Bam and Kirman districts, and an internal leadership struggle among the Musha'sha' Arabs in Khuzistan. Meanwhile, there were more disturbances at Isfahan in the shah's absence in 1718. Finally, in the summer of 1719 Mahmud left Qandahar with 11,000 men. He entered Kirman unopposed when the local governor fled and the persecuted Zoroastrian inhabitants helped or at least welcomed him. After staying for nine months he returned to Qandahar upon hearing of a revolt

<sup>245</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 87-93, 96-99; Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 9-10.

<sup>246</sup> De Bourges is cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 114.

there.<sup>247</sup> In October 1720 the court moved 100 miles east from Qazvin to Tehran on the advice of Fath 'Ali Khan Daghistani, the *i'timad al-dauleh* (Chief Minister), who proposed they proceed to Khorasan and there join forces with the army of Shiraz under his nephew Lutf 'Ali Khan. Instead, the two ministers with the most influence over the shah—the mullabashi Muhammad Husayn and the *hakimbashi* (chief royal physician) Rahim Khan—arranged Fath 'Ali Khan's fall from grace in December 1720 on a false charge of treason, and the imprisonment of Lutf 'Ali Khan, out of envy of their power and religious resentment (the two Daghistanis were Sunnis). Their armies promptly broke up, leaving Iran with few good troops or competent military leaders.<sup>248</sup>

These mishaps set off a chain of events that further undermined the Safavids' increasingly perilous position. When Fath 'Ali Khan, who was a Lezghi, was removed and maltreated, the Lezghis increased their rebellion, putting themselves under Ottoman rule. In Georgia, Wakhtang VI, whose claim to the throne of Kartli and *vali*-ship of Georgia had been rescinded by the Safavids in 1714 then reinstated in 1719, had raised an army of 60,000 Georgians to subdue the Lezghis in the summer of 1720. Fearing his power too, however, the *hakimbashi* and *mullabashi* persuaded the shah to order him to disband the army the next winter when it was in full operation: "So infuriated was he by this message that he drew his sword in the presence of the Shah's courier, and swore never to use it again in the service of the Şafavî dynasty."<sup>249</sup> This removed yet another competent military commander and fighting force from the Iranian scene on the eve of the Afghan invasion.<sup>250</sup> It also furnished a ready pretext for Russian intervention in Iran's affairs. After Wakhtang's dramatic estrangement there was no one to check the Ghazi-Ghumuq and Qaraqaitaq Lezghi tribes who sacked

<sup>247</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty*, 99, 109-12; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 318; on Isfahan in 1718, there is a letter of October 14, 1718, in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 542.

<sup>248</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty*, 119-122.

<sup>249</sup> Lang, "Georgia and the Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty," 535, based on Krusinski, *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 269, and Sekhnia Chkeidze's *Chronique* in Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie* (St. Petersburg, 1856-57), 35. See also Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 319-20, and Lockhart, *The Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty*, 118-19.

<sup>250</sup> Krusinski notes that Mir Vais's Afghans felt "That the Persians were but Women compar'd with the Afghans, and the Afghans but Women compar'd with the Georgians": *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 198. While Dickson feels the prowess of the Georgians, particularly Wakhtang, was much over-rated by Lockhart—see "The Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty," 512—Lang notes that "Clearly the fall of the Şafavî dynasty was not caused by Wakhtang's defection alone.... Nevertheless, if any prop could have held up the edifice, it might have been the military support of Georgia": "Georgia and the Fall of the Şafavî Dynasty," 539. These events are what I have labelled *contingent* factors in the long fall of the Safavids.

Shamakhi in August/September 1721. Russian merchants in the city lost between 472,000 and four million rubles in goods, and Peter the Great's governor at Astrakhan advised him that he now had both the right—the danger to Russians mentioned in the treaty of 1717—and the opportunity to invade.<sup>251</sup> As for the situation in the Gulf, the Dutch lost some 20,000 pounds sterling worth of goods when 4,000 Baluchi tribesmen raided Bandar 'Abbas in 1721, and trade was considerably reduced.<sup>252</sup>

The dénouement began in the fall and winter of 1721, when the Ghalzai leader Mahmud of Qandahar once more entered Iran. With him he had perhaps 10,000 Ghalzais and several thousand Hazaras, being joined en route by Baluchi tribesmen for a total force of about 18,000. Besieging Kirman from late October 1721 till January 1722, Mahmud lost 1,500 men in a direct assault, then marched away in return for a sum of money. In February 1722 he failed to take Yazd, after which he immediately began an advance on Isfahan. An Iranian army of perhaps 42,000 men (estimates vary from 30,000 to 80,000), some experienced but many hastily assembled from among the peasants and townsmen of the area, marched out to meet the Afghans at Gulnabad, 18-19 miles from Isfahan. There, on March 8, 1722, owing to their lack of training coupled with the indecision and perhaps treachery of certain of their officers, among other factors, they were routed with the loss of 5,000 soldiers to the Afghans' 500.<sup>253</sup>

Though Isfahan was not completely encircled by the rather limited Afghan forces until the end of April, the shah was advised to stay in the city by his incompetent (and in the case of the *vali* of

<sup>251</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 128-29; Lang, "Georgia and the Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty," 536. In 1717 this governor, Volinsky, had already reported: "In my humble opinion, God is leading this empire to its ruin ... As a result of the weakness here, we can begin a war with Persia without any apprehension, for without a complete army, but with simply a small force, a great part of it can be joined to Russia": cited in *ibid.*, 535.

<sup>252</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, 125. The Gombroon Diary of the EIC in a September 1721 entry "mentions frequent invasions of Balūchīs and "Ophgoons" (Afghans) "who range the country even within sight of Spahaun and many times carry away both Goods and Merchants, [and] have very considerably reduced the Trade of Persia in general"': cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 406.

<sup>253</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 130-43. Minorsky dates the Battle of Gulnabad 19 Jamadi I 1134/6 March 1722: *Tadhkirat al mulūk*, 10. The French consul at Isfahan, Gardanne, reported Iranian losses at 1200-1300, Afghans at 200-300: Lang, "Georgia and the Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty," 537, based on a letter of March 19, 1722 in the French Foreign Ministry Archives. Gardanne's interpreter, an Armenian from Georgia named Joseph (Hovsep) Apisalaïmian, provides the figures of 5,000 and 500 respectively: see T. H. Weir, "The Revolution in Persia at the Beginning of the 18th Century (from a Turkish MS in the University of Glasgow)," pp. 480-490 in T. W. Arnold and Reynold A. Nicholson, editors, *ʿAjabnameh. A Volume of Oriental Studies presented to Edward G. Browne* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1922), 488.

'Arabistan, the commander-in-chief who was in secret correspondence with the Afghans, treasonous) ministers.<sup>254</sup> Appeals for aid went out to Wakhtang in Georgia, Ali Mardan Khan in Luristan, the Bakhtiari and Shahsavan tribes, and others. Wakhtang, true to his vow, refused to come, and also prevented his son from setting out. Ali Mardan Khan, the *vali* of Luristan, reached Golpaygan, 140 miles to the northwest, on May 13; when his demand to be made commander-in-chief was refused, he withdrew his forces. The Shahsavan tribes of Azerbaijan failed to muster. One relieving force was routed by the Afghans in early May; another under Malik Mahmud, governor of Tun, was bought off by Mahmud. On the night of June 7/8, Tahmasp Mirza, the shah's third son and heir apparent, managed to get out of the city and reached Kashan, then Qazvin, where he did nothing to raise any troops. By and large, the disinterest of the provinces in rallying to the Safavids was conspicuous in its uniformity.<sup>255</sup>

Already in April the price of bread had undergone a "marked increase" as the Afghans invested the city, which was swelled above its normally huge population by villagers seeking refuge. Famine broke out in mid-June, Mahmud burned the crops around Isfahan at the end of the month, and prices soared in July. The chronicler Muhammad Khalil noted that "people who were clad in silk, ate leaves like the silk-worm."<sup>256</sup> Money ceased to have any value—one foraging party found fourteen 654-lb. sacks in the cellar of a rich merchant, but as these turned out to be filled with silver coins, not corn, they left, "Bitterly disappointed."<sup>257</sup> Friar Alexander of Malabar, who lived

<sup>254</sup> A good example of Lockhart's "personalist" mode of explanation is the following passage:

If the foolish Shāh had only listened to his son instead of paying heed to the false charges of the *Mullā-bāshī* and his other evil counsellors, the situation might yet have been saved. But Shāh Šultān Husain was fated always to take the wrong course.

*The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 148. On the *vali* of Arabistan, see *ibid.*, 154, and Friar Alexander of Malabar, "The Story of the Sack of Isfahan by the Afghans in 1722," pp. 643-653 in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, volume XXIII, part IV (October 1936), 648.

<sup>255</sup> On Wakhtang, see Lang, "The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty," 538. On 'Ali Mardan Khan, see Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 159; Savory says he got within 40 miles of Isfahan in June, and demanded the shah's abdication in favor of his brother, which was refused: "Safavid Persia," 426. Krusinski attributes the failure of the Luris and Bakhtiaris to come to Isfahan's rescue to factional divisions within each tribe: *The History of the Late Revolutions of Persia*, 97. On the Shahsavan, see Tapper, "Black Sheep, White Sheep and Red Heads," 67. See also Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 159, 161, 167.

<sup>256</sup> Muhammad Khalil Mar'ashi-yi-Safavi, *Majma' al-Tawarikh dar tarikh-i inqirad-i Safaviya va Waqa'i ba'd ta sal 1207 hijri qamari* (Collection of Histories on the Story of the Fall of the Safavids and Events till the year 1207/1792), edited by 'Abbas Iqbal (Tehran, 1328/1949), 58, cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 165. Also, *ibid.*, 158, 161.

<sup>257</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 166.

through the siege, has described the last stages of it in graphic detail:

... all streets and gardens were covered with dead bodies, so that it was not possible to put down your feet without coming to a place where piles of two or three human bodies lay rotting. For at the end of September ... horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, rats, mice and all that seemed eatable were sold at very high prices, but when all this had been consumed nothing but human flesh remained which could be purchased at the market, although it was not openly called by that name. Yea, the sword of hunger was sharpened so much, that not only when a person died, two or three men at once came who cut off pieces of the warm flesh, eating it without any pepper with great relish, but even young men and girls were enticed into houses and killed there to appease hunger. This sad banquet lasted to October, accompanied by such terrible circumstances that they cannot be described without shedding tears.... Camel-hides, bark of tress, leaves, rotten wood pounded and boiled in water tasted as sweet as honey, and oh! this unheard-of horror I saw with my own eyes, that people had to satisfy their hunger with dried human excrement.<sup>258</sup>

Famine, disease, vain efforts to escape through the Afghan lines, and a very limited amount of actual combat reduced the population by as many as 100,000 people.<sup>259</sup> Isfahan was utterly decimated by the siege; when James Morier visited almost a century later, he wrote: "Houses, bazaars, mosques, palaces, whole streets, are to be seen in total abandonment; and I have rode for miles among its ruins, without meeting any living creature..."<sup>260</sup> Finally, on October 23, 1722, Shah Sultan Husayn left Isfahan and went to Mahmud's camp, where he placed his crown on the Afghan's head, saying "The Absolute King, God most High, is just; and to whom do they say, 'He makes him head'? At one time to me, now to you. At last, my son, I also submit to you. God alone be blessed."<sup>261</sup> With these pious words the long fall of the Safavid monarchy came to its abrupt end.

### III. Iran under the Afghans, 1722-1729

The Afghan conquerors ruled in Iran for only seven years, but their impact, politically, socially and economically, and in terms of external relations, was quite devastating, setting in motion eight decades of internal strife before a stable new dynasty emerged on the eve of the nineteenth century.

<sup>258</sup> Friar Alexander of Malabar, "The Story of the Sack of Ispahan by the Afghans in 1722," 648-49.

<sup>259</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 169. The suffering hit all social classes, as the *Tadhkirat al mulūk*, 76, 77, describes one bureaucratic department where 11 out of 15 scribes lost their lives during the siege or afterwards, and in another, "Most of the secretaries of the said Department are no [longer] in existence."

<sup>260</sup> James Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia and Asia Minor* (London, 1818), 134, cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 169.

<sup>261</sup> Sultan Husayn is quoted in Apisalaïmian's manuscript—Weir, "The Revolution in Persia at the Beginning of the 18th Century," 489.

Before assessing the changes that occurred in this period, an overview of the chief events of the Afghans' rule and eventual fall is in order.

### III.A. Overview of the Period

Mahmud began his rule, based only at Isfahan, by bringing in food to end the famine, executing rather than rewarding most of those Iranians who had been guilty of treason during the siege, and retaining Safavid ministers and high officials in their posts, with an Afghan acting jointly with each. Tahmasp, the son of the last Safavid shah, Sultan Husayn, declared himself shah at Qazvin on November 22, 1722, but like his father he took to drink, did little to raise troops and had to flee to Zanzan and Tabriz that winter when the Afghan general Amanullah approached Qazvin with 4,000 men. The Qazvinis rose up on January 8, 1723, routing Amanullah and his forces, who fell back on Isfahan. Fearing a similar revolt, Mahmud then invited 300 Iranian ministers and notables to a dinner on January 25, killing 275 of them, and followed this up with a massacre of 200 of their sons on the 27th, and then 3,000 Iranian soldiers on the 31st. By May famine had broken out again, as nobody could enter or leave the city. From 1723 to 1725 much fighting occurred; Mahmud besieged and took Shiraz after nine months of resistance, as well as Golpaygan and Kashan, which had revolted. Bihbihan, in Kuhgilu, and Yazd, on Mahmud's resupply route to Qandahar could not be subdued however. Meanwhile, by 1723 Russian armies had occupied the coastal areas of Mazandaran and Gilan around the Caspian, while the Ottomans advanced into Georgia and Azerbaijan. Their 1724 "partition" of Iran and subsequent withdrawal will be discussed below.<sup>262</sup>

In April 1725, as Mahmud became increasingly ill and mentally unbalanced, his cousin Ashraf was released from prison by leading Afghans and proclaimed shah after Mahmud was murdered. Ashraf's effective jurisdiction was limited to such central Iranian cities as Isfahan and Shiraz, and he could get no reinforcements from Qandahar because Mahmud's elder brother opposed him there.<sup>263</sup> His reign continued to be marked by incursions from the Ottomans, who invaded as far as Hamadan

<sup>262</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 191-206; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 576-77.

<sup>263</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 274-75; Aubin, "Les sunnites du Lārestān," 163 note 2; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 581.

in 1726 and to whom Ashraf ceded most of western and northwestern Iran the next year.<sup>264</sup> The internal challenge to Afghan rule proved even stronger. In 1726, Tahmasp, the Safavid claimant to the throne, joined forces with a military adventurer from the Afshar tribe in Khorasan named Nadir, who over the next two years emerged as the real military and political leader of the anti-Afghan cause, with Tahmasp a necessary and useful rallying symbol for the Iranian people who gave the cause enthusiastic support.<sup>265</sup> In May 1729 Nadir campaigned successfully against the Abdali Afghans in the Herat area. He then moved against Ashraf and the Ghalzais, defeating them twice and entering Isfahan on November 16. Ashraf's army was defeated a final time outside Shiraz in late December 1729, and Ashraf himself was killed while fleeing eastward a week later. The Afghan conquest of Iran was over, leaving Tahmasp a figurehead Safavid shah and his general Nadir the de facto ruler of Iran.<sup>266</sup>

### III.B. Internal Political and Economic Changes, 1722-29

In referring to the 1720s, the contemporary chronicler Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali Hazin lamented: "... the whole empire was in a state of ruin, and the royal ordinances and statutes during these few years of interregnum had been broken and scattered to the four winds."<sup>267</sup> Modern historians have generally concurred with this assessment; as Ann Lambton puts it, after 1722 "a period of disorder followed. Trade was interrupted and a general decline in civic and cultural life took place."<sup>268</sup> A partial challenge to this view has been registered by Thomas Ricks, who points out that in political terms there was substantial continuity of institutions and even of specific office holders from later Safavid times (1700-1722) to the Afghan occupation (1722-29) and on to the period of

<sup>264</sup> Savory, "Safavid Persia," 428.

<sup>265</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 321; Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 593-94. On Nadir's origins and early career, see Laurence Lockhart, *Nadir Shah. A Critical Study Based Mainly Upon Contemporary Sources* (London: Luzac & Co., 1938), 17-24.

<sup>266</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 330-39; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 36-39.

<sup>267</sup> Muhammad 'Ali Hazin, *Tadhkirat al-Ahwal*, translated by F. C. Belfour, *The Life of Shaikh Mohammed Ali Hazin* (London, 1830), cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 299.

<sup>268</sup> Ann K. S. Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," pp. 430-467 in P. M. Holt *et al.*, editors, *The Cambridge History of Islam*, volume 1, *The Central Islamic Lands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 430.

Afshar rule under Nadir (1729-1740s). Ricks argues that "the provincial and capital administration ... remained essentially intact" and shows that of 22 principal civilian and military administrators the same *person* held the position throughout the period in 11 cases, and in the other 11 there was continuity between Safavid and Afghan rule or between Afghan and Afshar rule.<sup>269</sup> Though we have already seen that Mahmud murdered almost 300 leading notables at Isfahan in 1723 and subsequently exterminated most of the Safavid family in 1725, it is of interest that the Turkish ambassador at Isfahan in March/April 1729 noted that Ashraf was surrounded by "the grandees of the court who were all Qizilbāsh."<sup>270</sup> Both the political institutional framework and administrative class as a whole then seem to have weathered the storm reasonably intact.

Economically, and in human terms, however, "decline" is too mild a word for what happened. Lockhart characterizes the state of the Iranian people during Ashraf's reign as "terrible," due to wars, rebellions, famine, pestilence and the destruction of their homes and means of livelihood.<sup>271</sup> Malcolm, writing in 1815, estimated that almost one million people had died as a result of the Afghan invasion (out of a population we have estimated at 6-10 million).<sup>272</sup> Issawi, following Pigulevskaya and her collaborators, feels that the main cities of Iran may have lost two-thirds or even more of their inhabitants (in the whole of the eighteenth century).<sup>273</sup> Some 100,000 people may have died at Isfahan during the siege of 1722; an Iranian merchant told Jonas Hanway in 1754 that from its former 100,000 households, it now numbered only 5,000.<sup>274</sup> Shiraz, whose population was estimated at 72,000 in the seventeenth century, is said to have lost as many as 100,000 [!] people to famine and warfare during the nine month siege of 1723; the Afghans killed more inhabitants as they fled Iran in late 1729.<sup>275</sup> Tabriz, with its estimated 150,000 inhabitants, may have lost

<sup>269</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 56. Elsewhere he seems to go too far in arguing for economic continuity as well: *ibid.*, 40-41, 46. Lambton provides further evidence on continuity in the bureaucratic elite of the eighteenth century within an overall context of lesser institutional power: "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 112.

<sup>270</sup> Cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 294.

<sup>271</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 298, 349-50.

<sup>272</sup> Malcolm, *The History of Persia*, volume II, 42.

<sup>273</sup> Issawi, "Population and Resources in the Ottoman Empire and Iran," 162, citing Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Istoriya Irana* (Leningrad, 1958), 318; see also Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 598.

<sup>274</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 169; Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea* (London, 1754), 156, cited by Issawi, "Population and Resources in the Ottoman Empire and Iran," 161.

<sup>275</sup> Table 2.7 of Chapter Two has the sixteenth-century estimate; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Šafavī Dynasty*, 203.

80,000 to an earthquake in 1721 and thousands more in the fighting from 1722 to 1725, reduced to perhaps 30,000 in all by the end of the decade.<sup>276</sup> The sixteenth-century capital of Qazvin is said to have fallen from 12,000 households to 1,100.<sup>277</sup> Instances of plague were reported in Hamadan during the Ottoman occupation, 1724-32.<sup>278</sup>

The urban sector seems to have borne the brunt of the economic dislocations that followed. The Armenian merchant community suffered from tax extortion, confiscation of its property and the loss of up to 200,000 lives at Isfahan, Tabriz and elsewhere between 1722 and 1725.<sup>279</sup> The Indian merchants of Isfahan were completely ruined by Mahmud, while the entire community at Shiraz is said to have been killed as the Afghans fled in 1729.<sup>280</sup> Regional and long distance trade were drastically reduced, and will be examined below. Towndwellers of all classes were hit by high prices and periodic shortages that led to famine. Prices of rice at Isfahan in 1724 were five times those of 30 to 50 years earlier, and bread was two to three times higher.<sup>281</sup> In 1729, before the liberation of Isfahan by Nadir's forces, the Turkish ambassador reported that "many people were dying of starvation in the streets of Isfahān, where the citizens lived in fear of being expelled from their houses and put to death."<sup>282</sup> The ulama too were a particular group that suffered disproportionately, as "hundreds of scholarly families" were displaced to the Shi'i shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala in Ottoman Iraq by the Sunni Afghans, who also confiscated waqf properties, killed ulama and destroyed their educational institutions.<sup>283</sup>

Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 46.

<sup>276</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavī Dynasty*, 253; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 579; Issawi, "Population and Resources in the Ottoman Empire and Iran," 162.

<sup>277</sup> Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade*, 156, cited by Issawi, "Population and Resources in the Ottoman Empire and Iran," 161.

<sup>278</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 579.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*; Friar Alexander, "The Story of the Sack of Ispahan by the Afghans in 1722," 650; Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavī Dynasty*, 192.

<sup>280</sup> Keyvani, *Artisans and Guild Life*, 231-32; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 46.

<sup>281</sup> Data on 1724 prices is from *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 586. The seventeenth-century prices are listed in Table 3.4 of this chapter.

<sup>282</sup> Cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavī Dynasty*, 294.

<sup>283</sup> Juan Cole, "Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722-1780: The Akhbari-Usuli Conflict Reconsidered," pp. 3-34 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XVIII, number 1 (Winter 1985), 5; Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 290.

To sum up, warfare, troop movements, famine and disease restricted economic activity, undoubtedly forcing localities back onto their own resources. A vicious cycle of decline in population and production was touched off in the 1720s, amounting to a collapse unprecedented in the two hundred years of development we have so far traced, comparable only to the even more devastating Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century in their ruinous impact on the Iranian political economy.

### **III.C. Iran's External Relations, 1722-29.**

The extensive diplomatic and commercial relations that Iran had enjoyed with its neighbors and the European world under the Safavids deteriorated and crumbled as decisively as did the internal economy under the Afghans. When the nearby empires of the Ottomans and Russians invaded an Iran divided between Ashraf and Tahmasp a complex, four-sided struggle was touched off that added greatly to the economic and political dislocations of the period. This in turn forced a drastic reduction in commercial contact with the West, particularly England and Holland, further exacerbating the downward spiral.

**Relations with Russia, the Ottomans and Mughals.** As we have seen, since at least 1715 Peter the Great harbored ambitions of extending the Russian presence on the Caspian Sea in order to obtain a share of Iran's silk trade and to lay the basis for trade with India through Iran or Khiva. After concluding peace with Sweden in September 1721, Peter set sail from Astrakhan in July of 1722 with 274 vessels and an army of over 100,000 men, ostensibly to save Sultan Husayn from the Afghans besieging Isfahan. The Russians were resisted by the Qaitaq and Qaraqaitaq tribes but were welcomed by the Iranian Deputy-Governor of Darband on August 23/September 3. Two days later, however, the Russians' supply fleet was destroyed in a storm, and a Turkish envoy arrived to warn them not to proceed inland into Shirvan. Tahmasp Mirza, the Shah's son who had escaped the Afghan siege to Isfahan, offered to cede Russia Rasht, Shamakhi and Baku for help against a local Shirvani leader under Turkish protection, but Peter had to return to Russia on September 6/17 after leaving a strong garrison at Darband. Russia had thus moved about 130 miles into Iran along the Caspian coast, but had lost 33,000 men to the diseases of the region and raiding tribesmen.<sup>284</sup>

<sup>284</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 177-89. The dual dates in this section are owing to the difference between the Julian Old Style and Gregorian New Style calendars.

In March 1723 Iranian efforts were made to attack Russian forces in Gilan, but these failed at Rasht and elsewhere. As at Darband and Rasht, the inhabitants of Baku had initially asked for Russian aid against the Afghans who now held Isfahan, but changed their minds when they perceived Russian intentions to occupy the entire territory. Thus Baku had to be taken by force in July/August 1723. In September Peter obtained a treaty from a representative of Tahmasp under duress, which the would-be Safavid shah never confirmed but which Peter used as a pretext for his subsequent incursions. The terms were for Russia to receive Darband and Baku, Gilan, Mazandaran and Astara-bad in exchange for assistance in expelling the Afghans, with citizens of both countries to have freedom of trade and residence in the other. This intervention was diplomatically confirmed and extended on July 8, 1724, when Russia and the Ottoman Empire, after barely averting a war with each other over Iran, signed a treaty partitioning Iran among themselves and Tahmasp. Russia was to administer the territories it had already claimed, the Ottomans were to receive Tabriz and most of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, with the cities of Hamadan and Kirmanshah, and Georgia and parts of Shirvan. The final article of the treaty was an ultimatum to Tahmasp that he must accept the loss of these provinces or he would be deposed and the Russians and Ottomans would mutually designate another Iranian to rule what was left of the country.<sup>285</sup>

The powerful impetus behind Russian intervention was seriously undermined when Peter the Great died in 1725, after which the initiative passed to the Ottomans in Iran. Just before his expulsion from Iran by Nadir in 1729, Ashraf signed a peace with Russia providing for ceasing quarrels, exchange of ambassadors and free trade except for the customary dues. The original aim of gaining control over the silk produced in Gilan probably brought little profit to Russia in the 1720s owing to the warfare and instability of the region in that decade.<sup>286</sup>

The Ottomans likewise chose to intervene in Iran, though this decision, unlike Russia's, was not made before 1722. In fact, Ottoman motives were primarily to forestall Russian advances in the

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 233-35, 242-50. The text of the "Russo-Ottoman Treaty for the Partition of Persia's Northwest Provinces," dated June 13/24, 1724, is found in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 44-45.

<sup>286</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 249-50, 296-97, 358.

Caucasus toward the Black Sea, although the longstanding religious and political rivalries with the Safavids undoubtedly also played a role and magnified the violence of the encounter. In 1723 they occupied much of Georgia and in the spring of 1724 they took Khoi in Azerbaijan. After the partition treaty was signed with Russia, Ottoman armies captured Hamadan and Erivan with losses of 20,000 soldiers or more in September 1724 but Tabriz held out until August 1725. In 1724-25 Tahmasp defeated the Ottomans once but then was forced to retreat to Mazandaran. By 1725 Ottoman forces had advanced beyond the terms of the partition to Ardabil, Luristan and the Kirmanshah area. In 1726 they declared war on Ashraf; the Ottoman and Afghan armies met near Hamadan, and despite the former's superior numbers (70-80,000 to 17,000), Ashraf disoriented them by appealing to their common Sunni beliefs and calling for an alliance against the "heretical" Shi'i Safavids. This caused 20,000 Kurds to defect to his side and the demoralized Ottoman army lost 12,000 men in the ensuing battle. In late 1727 Ashraf crowned this success by agreeing to a treaty whereby the Ottoman sultan was acknowledged as "head of the Muslim world" and granted sovereignty over large parts of western and northwestern Iran, while Ashraf was recognized as shah of an Iran now reduced to Persian Iraq, Fars, Sistan, Kirman and western Khorasan. During the period of belligerency, in late autumn 1726, Ashraf had ex-Shah Sultan Husayn executed, as the Ottomans declared they were fighting to reinstate him. The Ottomans thus shifted from opportunistic support of Tahmasp's claims to Safavid legitimacy to partition of Iran with the Afghans and Russians, whom they uneasily continued to accept as allies through 1729.<sup>287</sup>

The patterns of a divided Iran's relations with the Mughals, their third great neighboring world-empire, were far friendlier than in the Ottoman or Russian cases, but were characterized above all by a loss of contact in the 1720s, approximating the European patterns. As we have seen the important Indian merchant community at Isfahan was expropriated by Mahmud while that at Shiraz was massacred when Ashraf fled in 1729. The internal upheavals in Iran were mirrored on a lesser scale by famine in southern India and fighting in Gujarat, leading to a "considerable recession" in

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 261-72, 289-92; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 578; Savory, "Safavid Persia," 428; Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran. A Developing Nation in World Affairs, 1500-1941* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1966), 20-22.

the trade between the two countries. English merchants in Bengal and Madras commented in 1727 on the decay of commerce and profits.<sup>288</sup>

**Relations with the Dutch, English and French.** European trade with Iran in the 1720s fell off drastically due to the Afghan invasion and occupation, and the ensuing external and internal warfare and disturbances. The representatives of the various East India companies suffered economic losses through looting and extortion at the hands of the Afghans, and were not immune to the general hardships of famine and even loss of life in the period from 1722 to 1725. In 1725, total trade receipts at Bandar 'Abbas (which the Afghans occupied only briefly in late 1724 to 1725) came to much less than 1000 tumans. Despite Ashraf's desire to restore trade with the Europeans, the adverse conditions persisted and trade remained at a virtual standstill.<sup>289</sup>

After giving Sultan Husayn some 17,000 tumans during the siege of Isfahan, the Dutch were compelled shortly afterwards to give Mahmud 23,000 more. Nor did this prevent their factory at Isfahan from being destroyed by the Afghans in 1723. When the Dutch tried to get possession of the island of Hormuz with a bribe in 1728, Ashraf sent forces against them at Bandar 'Abbas who killed a number of their agents, including the director, before the English could negotiate an end to the fighting. Lockhart considers that this incident "marked the beginning of their decline in Persia."<sup>290</sup> In 1729 as Ashraf fled Isfahan the Dutch factory there was again looted, as was the one at Shiraz shortly after. The dislocation of Dutch commerce by the Afghan invasion is revealed by figures for sugar exports to Iran: from 1,364,000 pounds in 1718/19 to 366,000 in 1721/22 to none from 1723 to 1726, and 71,000 in 1727/28, followed by none again till 1730/31.<sup>291</sup>

The English fared no better in this decade. If they lent less to the Safavids during the siege and paid less to the Afghans afterwards, it was because they had less wealth in Iran to begin with. At Bandar 'Abbas in 1723 a quarrel broke out between English soldiers of the EIC and the Iranian

<sup>288</sup> Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, 195.

<sup>289</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 417-19.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 422; also 415, 421-25, and Friar Alexander, "The Story of the Sack of Ispahan by the Afghans in 1722," 653 (from the translator's note by H. Dunlop).

<sup>291</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740*, 165, table 32.

governor's men, escalating into two weeks of fighting in which the governor and 200 Iranians were killed along with 28 Englishmen. After Dutch mediation, the English paid a fine of 1000 tumans.<sup>292</sup> As the Afghans fled Shiraz in 1729 they plundered the English factory there and drove its residents out of town; losses amounted to 7,000 tumans or 17,000 pounds sterling.<sup>293</sup>

The French were less extorted from by the Afghans than the EIC or VOC; Mahmud even favored them somewhat as they had recognized him as shah just before the end of the siege. In the end, they were still forced to make a payment of 30 tumans. The French maintained a consul at Isfahan until May, 1730, but a memorandum of Dupleix in 1727 reports that "The India Company used to have a house at Bender-Abassy, of which it never made much use; now it is falling in ruins."<sup>294</sup>

Thus, to conclude this assessment of Iran's external relations with the Europeans, the period of the Afghan occupation witnessed a near total cessation of trade abroad. The vicissitudes of trade were reflected in the difficulties of even maintaining communication: in September 1724 the Carmelite order at Basra still didn't know the fate of the European community of Isfahan during the 1722 siege, while Iranian merchants in Constantinople went a year and a half without news in 1722-23. In 1729 the Jesuits reported that "for many years" Armenia and Isfahan had not been in communication.<sup>295</sup>

#### IV. Iran under Nadir Shah, 1729-1747

<sup>292</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 414-16. Ricks claims that the English generally had a policy after 1723 of not getting involved in internal disputes, fearing to anger the rival Afghan, Arab and Iranian forces, and realizing that even if they backed the winning side, their choice might still extort from them afterwards: "Politics and Trade," 218.

<sup>293</sup> Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 424-25; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 46, 46 note 3.

<sup>294</sup> Cited by Lockhart, *The Fall of the Safavi Dynasty*, 469, translation mine. See also Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 282.

<sup>295</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 583, 585.

#### **IV.A. Overview of the Period**

Nadir, the military leader who proclaimed himself shah in 1736 and ruled until his death in 1747, can be credited with restoring the national sovereignty of Iran by driving out the Afghans in 1729, and forcing the departures of the Russians by 1735 and the Ottomans in the 1730s with a formal peace treaty in 1746. From 1738 on he carried the military exploits of Iran beyond its own borders, into Mughal India, Uzbek Central Asia and the Persian Gulf (see Map 3.1 in Appendix II). In the process he wore the country out, financially and in terms of human lives, to supply his enormous armies. After deposing the incompetent Tahmasp II in 1732 in favor of his infant son 'Abbas III (both were killed by order of Nadir's son in 1740), Nadir dropped all pretense of serving the Safavid dynasty in 1736 when he convened 20,000 delegates on the Mughan plain and accepted the throne on condition that all support him and reject the Safavids. He also demanded that Iran abandon Shi'ism and become Sunni under the aegis of a new school of law based on the teachings of the sixth imam, Ja'far as-Sadiq.

After successful campaigns abroad at Qandahar in 1738, followed by the spectacular and lucrative invasion of India in 1739 and a triumphant march through Uzbek territories in 1740, Nadir's reign marked a turning point in a long and costly effort to subdue the rebellious tribes of Daghistan in the Caucasus in 1741-42. After 1743 a series of internal revolts broke out in the Caspian area, Georgia, Fars, Astarabad and elsewhere as Nadir's constant fiscal exactions proved an impossible burden to bear. None of these was strong enough to defeat Nadir's powerful military machine alone, but the hostility between ruler and ruled deepened. After victory and a final peace settlement with the Ottomans in 1746, Nadir became increasingly unbalanced mentally. The last year of his reign was marked by excessive tax demands followed by executions of leading citizens and civil and military officers at Isfahan, Kirman and Mashhad (the latter became Nadir's capital in 1740). 'Ali Quli Khan, Nadir's nephew who was sent to Sistan to suppress yet another rebellion, joined with the rebels there and gained Sistani, Baluchi and Afghan tribal support, marching on Herat, closer to Nadir's own forces. Finally, on June 19, 1747, Nadir assembled his Afghan elite, and ordered the arrests of his Iranian generals. Hearing of this, Muhammad Khan Qajar and other conspirators

forestalled Nadir, and killed him in his tent. This put an end to a reign which had become increasingly bloody and wearisome for the Iranian people, but it inaugurated yet another period of tribal infighting for control of Iran, before Karim Khan Zand would emerge at Shiraz in the 1760s, leaving Khorasan in the northeast to Shahrukh, Nadir's grandson. Consideration of Iran's internal situation and foreign relations during the period of Nadir's rule from 1729 to 1747 will allow us to trace the impact of these events in terms of development and social change.<sup>296</sup>

#### IV.B. Internal Political, Economic and Cultural Changes, 1729-47

**The state and political organization.** After 1729, the old Safavid political structures were reinvested and renewed as Afshar, Bayat, Zanganah and Shamlu tribal families returned to high positions, land grants were resumed and the bureaucracy restored. At the center there was considerable continuity of both court structure and individual appointments from the earlier Safavid and Afghan periods.<sup>297</sup> The old bureaucratic families, such as the Jabiri, and those of Muhammad Hashim, the kalantar of Fars and of Mirza Sami'a, author of the *Tadhkirat al-muluk*, continued to serve the state.<sup>298</sup> Nadir sought to reestablish central authority over the provinces, often appointing his own relatives and successful generals as governors and frequently changing his personnel. Structural changes included an inevitable simplification of the revenue system and less elaborate links generally with the provinces, and a gradual disappearance of the distinction between state and crown provinces.<sup>299</sup> Strict financial accounts were demanded of the provincial authorities, however, and revenue collectors were apparently scrupulous, fearing to incur Nadir's wrath.<sup>300</sup> One estimate of state revenues is that they were higher than in the past, but owing to inflation amounted in fact to less than the sums collected in late Safavid times.<sup>301</sup>

<sup>296</sup> This overview of Nadir's reign has relied principally on Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*.

<sup>297</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 47, 56, 58.

<sup>298</sup> Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 112.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-25.

<sup>300</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 198, 271-72.

<sup>301</sup> Pigulevskaya *et al.* report that according to Hanway, Nadir's revenues reached 2,950 tumans [sic, perhaps 2,950,000 is intended—there is no citation from Hanway]; *Tarikh-i Iran*, 607.

Despite such institutional continuities, Nadir aimed in several ways to project a rather different imperial conception than had the Safavids. Lacking their claims to murshid status as leaders of a Sufi order, and as descendants from the Prophet and Shi'i imams, he tried instead to dis-establish Shi'ism altogether in Iran, a trajectory which will be discussed below under cultural change and the ulama. Above all, he presented himself as a military leader on the model of Timur (Tamerlane), campaigning far beyond the borders of Iran throughout Central Asia, Afghanistan and India.<sup>302</sup> The geopolitical center of his empire shifted eastwards, and accordingly he moved the capital from war-shattered Isfahan to the holy city of Mashhad, in Khorasan.<sup>303</sup> Politically, this expansionist tendency entailed an emphasis less on the bureaucracy as the central ruling institution, but rather the army as the basis of imperial power.

Nadir's armies were a composite of various tribal contingents—Turcomans, Kurds, Bakhtiari and other Iranian tribesmen, augmented by significant units of Afghans (the Abdalis), Uzbeks and Indians. For the Indian campaign of 1739, it numbered 80,000 soldiers and up to a million people in all, including its numerous supporting elements; in 1741 he took 150,000 men into Daghestan; in 1743 as many as 375,000 assembled for the Ottomans wars.<sup>304</sup> These huge masses lived in part off the booty they took in foreign lands, but had at times to be paid in cash; ordinary soldiers were paid as much as one tuman a month (the same amount used to maintain a Carmelite mission with two Fathers), while their commanders must have done even better, in some cases obtaining land grants though Nadir discouraged this.<sup>305</sup> Nadir also built Iran's first navy by commandeering ships from the Dutch and English to the number of 30 vessels by 1745, but their successes were limited and the fleet broke up soon after Nadir's death.<sup>306</sup> This aggressive military policy proved to be a considerable expense for the state, and played a major role in the economic impoverishment of the

<sup>302</sup> J. R. Perry, "The Last Safavids, 1722-1773," pp. 59-69 in *Iran* (Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies), volume IX (1971), 64; Roemer, "The Safavid Period," 328.

<sup>303</sup> Though Mashhad was the capital after about 1740, as Muhammad Mahdi ibn Muhammad Reza put it, "In truth, the real capital of his empire was the seat of a saddle and the back of a horse": *Nisf-i Jahan fi Tarikh-i Isfahan* [Half the World—The History of Isfahan], manuscript cited by Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 197 note 1.

<sup>304</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 113, 201 note 2; Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 56.

<sup>305</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 603; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 130-31.

<sup>306</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 214-16, 221-22.

population, whose situation we now consider.

**The economy.** The widespread hardship of the period, and its principal cause, are attested in the EIC's *Gombroon Diary* for July 21/August 1, 1743:

... Nothing but Misery, Tyranny and Oppression are to be seen or heard in these Parts, the People being daily tax'd (so) that before Time is given for collecting one Another is laid on.<sup>307</sup>

The tax burden fell most onerously on the urban merchant class, taxed "almost out of existence," particularly after 1742 when Nadir rescinded the three-year tax exemption he had granted the country after his conquest and looting of the Mughal empire, and demanded back taxes for the three years. On this occasion some 200-300,000 people were tortured or imprisoned for not producing the requisite sums.<sup>308</sup> The widespread impoverishment of the merchant class consequently distorted the local and regional trade of the internal Iranian economy; the effects on the import/export trade were also serious, and will be considered below. One response to this extortion was the migration of merchants from urban areas, particularly in the cases of the Zoroastrian, Armenian and Indian communities.<sup>309</sup> Those who remained faced difficulties of credit and mounting prices. Though at times Nadir arbitrarily intervened in the markets to lower the prices of goods (as at Isfahan in 1747),<sup>310</sup> there is ample evidence of inflationary tendencies for the period overall. The chronicler Muhammad Hashim Asaf reports a case of rapid price increases of ten times the normal amount for wheat, butter and meat at Isfahan, apparently during the 1740s.<sup>311</sup> By 1746-47 economic conditions there were so uncertain that money was lent at 15 percent a month.<sup>312</sup> The value of the tuman against the English pound sterling seems to have fallen by 16 percent from 1716 to 1743-48.<sup>313</sup>

<sup>307</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 218.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 270; Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 606-07.

<sup>309</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 126.

<sup>310</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 654; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 270 note 1, citing Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, volume I, 248. The curiously low price of grain in Fars in 1747 of 10 dinars per mann-i tabriz should also be noted: Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 128.

<sup>311</sup> Muhammad Hashim Asaf (Rustam al-Hukama), *Rustam al-tavarikh* [Rustam's History], edited by Muhammad Mushiri (Tehran: Shirkat-i Sahami-yi Kitabha-yi Jibi, 1348/1969), 211. The year is not specified, but quite possibly the 1746-47 situation is being described.

<sup>312</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 285-86.

<sup>313</sup> From three pounds sterling to two pounds, ten shillings, according to Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals and Seals of the Shāhs of Irān, 1500-1941*, table IV, between pp. 18 and 19. Rabino's sources are Ange Gardanc de Sainte-Croix, letter from Isfahan, September 15, 1718, in the *Archives des Affaires Étrangères* on Persia, and

On the production side, a certain amount of "industry" and building activity was organized by the state, but this went primarily for military purposes, and involved forced, rather than paid labor, thus benefitting local people very little. Nadir set up a cannon foundry at Bandar 'Abbas in September 1741 which cast only two copper cannons out of a projected 300. Cannon balls were manufactured on the other side of the country at Amol in Mazandaran. Building projects were located mostly in eastern Iran, and included Nadir's treasure-house at Kalat, which contained 4,500,000 tumans in gold and silver coins, plus jewels, carpets and other preciosities. It was made of marble, including huge blocks of 14-17 tons, three of which were popularly nicknamed "*Iran-i-kharab*" ("ruined Persia"), *kharaj-i-'alam* ("tribute of the world") and *'alam-i-kharab* ("ruined world")."<sup>314</sup>

If we examine data on specific local conditions, these generally negative trends are illustrated time and time again. Nadir's capital, Mashhad, grew to a city of 60,000 houses, with two or three hundred thousand inhabitants. When George Thompson arrived there in 1741 he described "a flourishing city":

... in time of peace it is a place of great trade, caravans are employed daily from Bokhara, Balkh, Biddukhshan, Kandahar, and India; as well as from all parts of Persia. The Bazars, or market-places, are large and well built, filled with rich merchandize, and frequented by great numbers of people of different nations.<sup>315</sup>

Thus this one part of Iran—Khorasan, in the northeast—prospered under Nadir, and was in a particularly thriving condition in 1741, just after the wildly successful invasion of India. The evidence from the rest of the country, however, is uniformly negative. We read of a long series of impositions at Isfahan, the former capital, beginning with heavy taxes to pay the soldiers who liberated it in 1729, followed by a levy of 18,000 tumans around 1738, then 1,000 tumans from the Armenians in 1744.<sup>316</sup> These taxes became outright extortions in January 1746, with the EIC factory records reporting that "the markets were low occasioned by the extraordinary oppression of the King who

Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, volume II, 20.

<sup>314</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 214-15; Pigulevskaya et al., *Tarikh-i Iran*, 607-08.

<sup>315</sup> Thompson is cited by Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 197, from Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, volume I, 356-57.

<sup>316</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 42, 112, 243.

had taken five thousand tomans of the Armenians at New Julfa under a false pretense."<sup>317</sup> A month earlier Nadir had had a number of notables killed, including the governor of Isfahan and kalantar of Julfa. In December 1746 he collected 300,000 tumans, a fortune, by such methods at Isfahan, of which 30,000 came from the Armenians. Citizens resorted to selling their children, boys for ten *mahmudis* (equal to 1,000 dinars or 1/10 of a tuman), girls for five. The tax-collectors said: "Money, money, ... the Shah wants it, whether justly or unjustly: say that another man owes you so much, and you and we shall be quits."<sup>318</sup> The EIC reported that Nadir, in the final stages of his growing madness, was killing 40-50 people a day to extort money.<sup>319</sup>

The rest of the country suffered equal disasters, natural and human. Famine broke out in eastern Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1735-36.<sup>320</sup> This same northwestern region was struck by the plague in 1737, at Ganja, Tiflis, Erivan and Tabriz, where 47,000 are said to have perished in two months.<sup>321</sup> Khoi saw its taxes raised from 3,000 to 100,000 tumans in 1744.<sup>322</sup> The rich province of Fars with its capital at Shiraz was oppressed by its governor Taqi Khan who drafted the inhabitants into the army and navy used in the campaigns against Oman. In 1744 Shiraz had to endure a four and a half month siege when Taqi Khan revolted against Nadir, and the plague killed 14,000 people there.<sup>323</sup> In February 1738 the people of Kirman were used in place of scarce draft animals to transport grain for the army from Kirman to Qandahar, a distance of about 600 miles, with men carrying 97-lb. loads and women 45 lbs. Seven years of famine followed, so that the EIC representative in Kirman, D. Graves, wrote in 1746 that the situation was very unfavorable for trade.<sup>324</sup> Some 72,000 rupees were exacted at Bandar 'Abbas for the Afghan campaign of 1738; a traveller from India to Basra through the Persian Gulf in 1750 wrote that since Nadir's

<sup>317</sup> Factory Records, Gombroon, January 28, 1746, cited by Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 118.

<sup>318</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 649-51.

<sup>319</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 257, 259.

<sup>320</sup> Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 598.

<sup>321</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 170.

<sup>322</sup> Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 607.

<sup>323</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 181, 241-42.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 116; Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 251.

Tyranny and Depredations ... the whole Country had assumed a new face, for there was not above one House in ten but was deserted of Inhabitants, at least if we may judge of other Places by what appeared at Gombroon.<sup>325</sup>

Judging from the above data, Bandar 'Abbas/Gombroon was indicative of the state of most of Iran in this period.

The peasantry faced a double burden on their crops and their labor. They continued to pay their usual quarter to a half of the crop to the state and/or landlord, and in addition often had their crops requisitioned to feed the massive army on its campaigns. A goodly number too must have been drafted into military service, while others did forced labor on the state's military and construction projects. The traveller Jean Otter had an opportunity to observe the countryside on two trips between Isfahan and Baghdad, via Kirmanshah; according to Lockhart:

Otter draws a gloomy picture of the peasantry; their state had been by no means enviable when he had travelled to Isfahan with 'Abdu'l-Baqi Khan in 1737, but, when returning to Baghdad two years later, he found that it had deteriorated a good deal more.<sup>326</sup>

Nadir's devastation of the Nakhchavan area is described by the Carmelite Monsignor Dominic Salvani in a letter of December 11, 1746:

After having killed all men of position, put out those eyes that saw well and sold their families to the soldiers, after having taken away from the community all their ploughing animals and removed all the grain for the army, he has turned to harass the people and fleece them with impossible taxes, which leave them as naked as worms...<sup>327</sup>

Those peasants who did not flee the area were impounded into the army.

The condition of the tribal sector of the economy presents a more mixed picture. Of the eighteenth century generally, Lambton discerns "an increase in the numbers and influence of the tribal groups" at the expense of the settled population.<sup>328</sup> Two distinct groups of tribes must be considered however. For those who served in Nadir's army—a heterogeneous ethnic and religious mix of Turcomans, Afghans, Uzbeks, Baluch, Kurds and Bakhtiয়ারis—there was a gain in political and

<sup>325</sup> John Perry, *Karim Khan Zand. A History of Iran, 1747-1779* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 226, citing B. Plaisted, *A Journey from Calcutta, in Bengal, by Sea, to Busserah ... in the Year 1750* (London, 1758), 10.

<sup>326</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 180-81, citing Jean Otter, *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse* (Paris: Frères Guerin, 1748), volume II, 13-14. Otter relates how he passed a scene of ruined and abandoned villages in the midst of a fertile plain: *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>327</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 360.

<sup>328</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 433-34.

economic status through military service and the booty this brought, but this expansion slowed down after 1741, and ceased altogether upon Nadir's death and the dispersal of his army in 1747. And as we have seen the military amirs were discouraged from acquiring vast estates, and to the extent they avoided this prohibition, their tenure was likewise rather precarious, tied to Nadir's rise and fall. For other, primarily non-eastern tribal groups, including both Iranian tribespeople and mountaineers, and many of the pro-Safavid Turcoman qizilbash tribes, Nadir's reign witnessed the hardships of forced migration and resettlement. Thus in 1730 some 50-60,000 families of tribespeople of Azerbaijan, Persian Iraq and Fars were ordered to Khorasan; in 1732 60,000 Abdali Afghans were moved from Herat to Mashhad, Nishapur and Damghan after their revolt was subdued; the same year 3,000 families of the Haft Lang branch of the Bakhtiyari were moved to Khorasan and in 1736 another 10,000 families were deported to Jam in Khorasan after a failed rebellion; 6,000 Georgian families from Tiflis were banished to Khorasan in 1735; and "massive deportations" from Larestan occurred in the 1730s.<sup>329</sup> Other tribes may have been relatively well-off in their local areas but the constant warfare probably worked against anyone being left alone for long. The overall tribal share of national wealth probably did increase; but this was unevenly distributed among the several groups identified above, and with an uneven effect at the various social levels within any given tribe from simple pastoralist up to the chiefs. Whether these gains outpaced the overall decline in the economy is difficult to assess in the absence of more specific data on tribal conditions. In the end, rather than a "resurgence" of tribal power, as Lambton discerns, the period evidences more a fragmentation of many competing tribal forces, thus setting the stage for the continued struggles for national preeminence and local influence which we see after Nadir's death.

**The ulama and religious developments.** Beginning with his self-elevation to the throne in 1736 Nadir attempted to establish a kind of "truncated" Shi'ism or "synthetic" Islam, based on the teachings of the Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq. He demanded that this be recognized as a fifth orthodox school (*mazhab*) of Islam both within Iran and by the Ottomans. Nadir's underlying

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<sup>329</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 131; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 51-54, 110; Aubin, "Les sunnites du Lārestān," 168-69.

motives involved both internal and external *raisons d'état*: to undercut support for the Shi'i Safavid dynasty, to gain the allegiance of his many Afghan, Uzbek and other Sunni soldiers, and to bolster his claim for leadership of the Islamic world against the adjacent Ottoman and Mughal empires.<sup>330</sup> This religious policy would fail in most of its aims, as externally the Ottomans rejected all peace treaties based on it and hostility continued unabated between the two empires, while internally it proved an impossible hybrid that took no roots, as Algar points out: "This proposal implied an abandonment of the whole Imamology of Shi'ism."<sup>331</sup> The project died with Nadir in 1747 as his successors quickly abandoned it for a return to Shi'ism.

Nevertheless the developments of this period would have significant ideological, political and material consequences for the ulama who had to live through them. Arjomand notes:

... Nadir's religious policy was of crucial significance in instituting a definitive break with the Safavid era through the systematic exclusion of religion from political organization. This was achieved by the virtual liquidation of the hierocracy as a branch of the Safavid caesaropapist state and by emphatically divesting temporal rule of hierocratic trappings.<sup>332</sup>

Nadir severely eroded the material basis of the official Shi'i ulama who had served or benefitted from the Safavid state. He told the sadr that the ulama were not entitled to vaqf revenues since their prayers had not forestalled the Afghan invasion.<sup>333</sup> Thus great amounts of vaqf land, especially around Isfahan, were confiscated and claimed by the crown. Although Nadir's successor, 'Ali Quli 'Adel Shah, revoked the decree, Malcolm reported in the early nineteenth century that the lands were not fully restored.<sup>334</sup> The revenue of the vaqfs attached to the shrine of Imam Reza at Mashhad, worth 15,000 Khorasani tumans in late Safavid times, brought only 2,000-2,500 tumans in 1821.<sup>335</sup> This forced a movement by ulama families away from ties to the court, toward increased marriage and economic ties to merchants and others in the bazaar. Based on research into the activities of the

<sup>330</sup> Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 291-93, 298-99; Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 431.

<sup>331</sup> Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 292.

<sup>332</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 217.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>334</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 132, citing Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), volume II, 313.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, citing J. B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan* (London, 1825), 455.

extensive Majlisi family, Juan Cole has identified the following economic options for the ulama at this time: 1) to emigrate to the Shi'i shrine cities of Ottoman Iraq; 2) to remain at Isfahan, often intermarrying with merchants and well-to-do artisans; 3) to work in lower-class trades—as "cotton or silk weavers, smiths, dyers, bleachers, and hat makers"—more often than in the past; 4) to move to smaller towns that were a bit safer than the large cities (the Majlisis migrated internally to Najafabad, Ardistan, Kazirun, Bihbihan and Yazd); or 5) to go to India as "literary men, civil servants, and physicians" as well as ulama.<sup>336</sup> Of these options, the first two—emigration to Iraq and integration into the bazaar community—were the most common among leading religious families, and both set in motion trends which greatly augmented the independent authority of the ulama, a development we will trace in the next period and beyond.

#### IV.C. Iran's External Relations, 1729-1747

**Relations with the Ottomans, Russia, Mughals and Uzbeks.** Nadir's most extensive "foreign relations" were the basically adversarial conflicts with the neighboring world-empires—the reconquest of Iranian territory from the Ottomans, the return of territory more diplomatically from the Russians, and more aggressive wars of conquest fought with the Mughals and Uzbeks. Thus he went beyond the popular demand for national territorial liberation to what amounted in effect to a policy of military expansionism which can be attributed to ambitions of being a great Central Asian conqueror on the scale of Timur, and his political needs of providing tribal chiefs with booty and filling his own empty treasury.

Wars were fought with the Ottomans from 1732 to 1746, with intermittent lulls to try to negotiate peace. In June 1730 a representative of Tahmasp, Nadir's figurehead shah, signed a treaty by which Iran would recover its western and northwestern provinces against payment of an annual sum to the Ottoman Empire. Nadir independently recovered Hamadan, Ardalan, Kirmanshah and finally

<sup>336</sup> Cole, "Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722-1780," 9, 12-13. Perry notes that an estimated one hundred thousand Iranian refugees lived in Baghdad and the nearby shrine towns, and Basra was said to be two-thirds populated by refugees: *Karim Khan Zand*, 237. These Iranians were mostly ulama and merchant families.

Tabriz that summer however, by military means. After an internal change of government in the Ottoman Empire, Tahmasp lost much of what Nadir had recovered in 1731 while Nadir was suppressing the Afghan tribes in the east, and in January 1732 Tahmasp ceded much territory to regain Tabriz from the Ottomans. When Nadir returned to Isfahan he was furious over this treaty and it was then (September 1732) that he had Tahmasp deposed in favor of the infant 'Abbas III. By October 1733 Nadir had defeated Ottoman forces again and proposed peace, which the Porte rejected in early 1734. Nadir retook Erivan, Ganja and Tiflis in 1735 again proposing peace, to which the Ottomans responded in 1736 by recognizing Nadir as shah but refusing acquiescence to his religious proposal to recognize a Ja'fari school of Sunni Islam.<sup>337</sup>

After campaigns of conquest in the east, Nadir assembled a huge army in 1743 to resume the struggle with the Ottomans. He invaded Mesopotamia (Ottoman Iraq), capturing Kirkuk and unsuccessfully besieging Mosul. Negotiations broke down again in 1744 and Nadir set out for the border once more, winning a major victory near Erivan in which the Ottomans lost 10-12,000 soldiers. Peace was finally agreed to on September 4, 1746 in the Treaty of Kurdan, which acknowledged the borders set by the 1639 Treaty of Zuhab. Nadir, exhausted personally despite his military successes, finally dropped his religious demands: an appendix to the treaty states that the Iranian people had "abandoned the unseemly innovations introduced in the time of the Safavis and having embraced the religion of the Sunnis, shall mention the Orthodox Caliphs, of blessed memory, with respect and veneration."<sup>338</sup> In reality, Iranians had not renounced Shi'ism, but Nadir's "synthesis" of Shi'ism and Sunnism.

The withdrawal of Russian forces from Iran was accomplished with far less human and economic destruction. Peter the Great's death in 1725 fortuitously removed the architect of Russian expansion into Iran from the scene. A further impetus was the deaths of some 130,000 Russian soldiers in Gilan and adjoining areas, mostly from disease. On February 1, 1732 the Empress Anna Ivanovna agreed to return the Caspian coastline to Iran, with the lands up to the Kura river to be

<sup>337</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 48-49, 105-06.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 231-32, 250-51, 255. The text of the treaty is found in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 51-52.

evacuated within five months, and north of it after the Ottomans left Iranian territory. In return for ceding back this territory, there was exchanged 1) a promise of peace and friendship, and 2) commercial concessions to the effect that Russian merchants might trade freely throughout Iran, paying no customs or duties on exports and imports, and enjoying consular representation in any cities of their choosing. The shah's merchants (not *all* Iranians) could trade their goods free of duty; others were subject to the usual terms of the Russian empire.<sup>339</sup> In May 1734 prince S.D. Golitsine arrived at Isfahan, and accompanied Nadir to the siege of Ganja, where he provided Russian engineers to help in the operations. In October the Russians evacuated to Darband, and left Baku in the spring of 1735. The Treaty of Ganja was signed on March 21, 1735 establishing Russia and Iran as "perpetual allies" and completing the return of Iranian territory. The main practical sense in which Iran was to be Russia's "ally" was in repelling Ottoman advances into Iranian territory. By 1742, however, Russian suspicions were aroused by Nadir's campaign in Daghistān near their border, causing 42,000 men to be dispatched on the Russian side. Diplomatic contact was maintained by a resident at Nadir's court and a consul in Gilan, but although the terms of the 1732 treaty afforded a considerable advantage to Russian merchants in Iran over those of other nations, actual trade does not seem to have amounted to much.<sup>340</sup>

The long period of friendly relations between Iran and Mughal India came to an end on Nadir's first major expansionist thrust, the invasion of 1739. Nadir had previously asked the Mughals to close their frontiers to Afghan fugitives, and when this was not done he sent an ambassador with instructions to return within 40 days, whom the Mughals detained. In Lockhart's view, Nadir was prompted to invade by a desire to raise wealth for paying his mercenary army of Afghans and Uzbeks to renew war with the Ottomans. Some contemporaries say he was "invited" to India by the Viceroy of the Deccan, Nizam ul-Mulk and/or by Saadat Khan, Subadar of Oudh.<sup>341</sup> The Iranian

<sup>339</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 58, 86; Hurewitz, "Treaty of Peace, Amity and Commerce: Persia and Russia," pp. 45-46 in *Diplomacy*, I.

<sup>340</sup> V. Minorsky, "Nādir Shāh," pp. 810-814 in M. Th. Houtsma *et al.*, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1927), 811; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 84, 84 note 1, 86, 282. Ferrier feels that "The impetus to trade given by Peter the Great survived his ill-fated campaign in 1722" ("Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 474), but in the absence of any data on this trade it seems best to be skeptical as to its volume.

<sup>341</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 122-24. Minorsky observes that "The expedition to India was provoked solely by the

army marched from Kabul to Peshawar and Lahore in January 1739, then won a victory over the main Mughal army on February 24 at Karnal, 75 miles north of Delhi (see Map 3.1). The Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah abdicated, and Nadir for a time assumed the crown of India. On March 20 Nadir entered Delhi; the next day there were rumors that Nadir had been killed or arrested, touching off riots that led to the deaths of 3,000 Iranian soldiers. In retaliation, whole sections of Delhi were looted and some 20,000 Indians killed. The city was assessed a tribute of 20 million rupees, while Nadir rewarded his soldiers, servants and camp followers with 60-100 rupees each and sent word to Iran that the provinces were exempt from taxes for three years. On May 12 Nadir formally re-crowned Muhammad Shah, who then ceded all of his territories west of the Indus from Tibet and Kashmir to the sea.<sup>342</sup> In addition to losses in terms of prestige and military power, the Mughals paid fabulous sums in indemnity as booty and tribute taxes. Minorsky observes:

The amount levied by Nādir cannot be estimated. According to Anandrām, who was attached to the vizier's office, it amounted to 6,000,000 rupees in specie and 500,000,000 in jewels and precious stones, including the Kūh-i Nūr diamond and the Peacock throne.<sup>343</sup>

Lockhart estimates that Nadir took 700,000,000 rupees (equal to 23 million tomans or 56-70 million pounds sterling) in money, jewels and objects of value out of India, of which one-fourth was lost en route back to Iran.<sup>344</sup> Most of this wealth was used by Nadir to pay his army and finance further campaigns against the Ottomans, or else was hoarded in his treasure-house at Kalat, while the three-year tax exemption for Iran was later rescinded, so the net benefits to the Iranian economy from this massive plunder of India were minimal at best.

The Uzbek khanates of Central Asia were Nadir's next target (see Map 3.1). In 1740 Nadir campaigned at Balkh and Khiva, setting up his own nominees as rulers and proclaiming the Oxus river as the northeastern frontier of Iran, further than it had been for most of the Safavid reign. He liberated some 30,000 captive Iranians who had been used as slaves in Khwarazm and required that

attraction of ill-guarded provinces and by the desire to replenish the treasury exhausted by repeated campaigns": "Nādir Shāh," 811.

<sup>342</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 128-53.

<sup>343</sup> Minorsky, "Nādir Shāh," 811.

<sup>344</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 152, 161.

the Uzbeks supply him with 20,000 soldiers for his own army. For a time in the 1740s, then, Nadir had control over the internal affairs of the Uzbek territories.<sup>345</sup>

**Relations with the Europeans.** The main issues to be resolved here are how much trade occurred, and what its characteristics were. Divergent assessments exist: Lockhart concludes that the period from 1729 to 1746 "was, on the whole, a most unfortunate time for trading in Persia."<sup>346</sup> In this view he is supported by Thomas Dorill, the English East India Company's resident at Basra, who wrote London in December 1745 that "the Name of Trade is forgot ... in Persia."<sup>347</sup> Ricks, in a discussion of the period from 1745 to 1750, states that "caravan-trade continued and transfer of treasure, foodstuffs and piece goods were carried on with little decrease in volume while the EIC and the OIC remained resolute in continuing their business in Southern Iran and the Gulf."<sup>348</sup> He also detects some shift in Iran's exports away from wool, foodstuffs and textiles to gold, silver, copper and pearls to pay for an increasing number of European woolen textiles.

If we consider silk, Iran's most important export in the Safavid period, some light may be shed on this controversy. In 1730, silk accounted for some four-fifths of English imports from the Middle East. But this was now coming primarily from new production for export in Syria, and no longer from Iran, with Middle Eastern silk being increasingly displaced in European markets by silk from Bengal, China and Italy. By 1741-45, England imported only 26 percent of its silk from the Levant ports, down from 72 percent in the 1660s, while in absolute terms the value of Middle Eastern raw silk imported fell from 274,000 pounds sterling annually in 1722-24 to 81,000 for 1752-54.<sup>349</sup> The silk production of Iran was said by English observers to have been a royal monopoly around 1739-40, administered by the shah's son, Reza Quli Mirza, or by the royal treasurer, a merchant of Isfahan.<sup>350</sup> It is not clear, but seems unlikely, that this monopoly remained for long in the state's hands. In any case, its advantages were effectively limited by a great decrease in production: in

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 188-89; Minorsky, "Nādir Shāh," 812; Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 604.

<sup>346</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 282.

<sup>347</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 286 note 1.

<sup>348</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 102.

<sup>349</sup> Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East, 1580-1780," 195-202.

<sup>350</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 175-76, based on Hanway and two English merchants, Elton and Graeme.

Gilan, which usually had produced almost half of Iran's silk, production fell precipitously from Chardin's estimated 1,380 tons in the 1670s to Hanway's estimate of 160-180 tons in the 1740s, an almost total collapse, while the breeding of silkworms came to a complete stop in nearby Shirvan.<sup>351</sup> If Iran's capacity to export raw silk was so severely undermined in this period, Lockhart's conclusion that trade was seriously impaired is to be preferred to Ricks's judgment, which is in fact more concerned with the continuity between the end of our period and the next. If there was such continuity, it was based on a continuing low level of trade.

A final general comment has to do with the state's lack of knowledge of Europe in the reign of Nadir Shah. In 1742 Nadir proposed an anti-Ottoman alliance with the English (apparently mistaking them for the Hapsburgs). The EIC agent commented: "We find they (i.e., the Persians) are entirely strangers to what lies without them."<sup>352</sup> Thus, Nadir's rather detailed intelligence on his military rivals in the region—the Ottomans and Russians—was predictably enough not matched by a comparable familiarity with the more distant Europeans, partners in a declining trade.

The English EIC entered a period of growing prosperity from 1715 to 1750, making gains against the Dutch on a world scale.<sup>353</sup> Nevertheless, times were not particularly good in the trade with Iran. As the silk trade declined, the English increased their imports of Kirmani goats' hair wool, which was used as a substitute for beaver in the hatting industry. Exports reached over 140,000 lbs. by 1736 but went into a decline for the next seven years when Kirman was wracked by famine due to Nadir's grain exactions; in 1746 the EIC representative wrote that the situation was very unfavorable for trade due to the government's oppression.<sup>354</sup> The government regularly extorted "taxes" from the company—300 tumans in 1729 and 1732; 4,500 during 1744; 6,400 in 1747.<sup>355</sup> In 1735 the factory at Isfahan was virtually closed down due to the general decline in trade and the impossibility of collecting on its loans due to the poverty of the inhabitants. The EIC re-

<sup>351</sup> Isawi, *EHI*, 13; Inalcik and Steenagaard, "Harir," 211; Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 478.

<sup>352</sup> *Gombroon Diary*, entry for May 24/June 4, 1742, cited by Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 225.

<sup>353</sup> Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 334; Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 68.

<sup>354</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 222, 251.

<sup>355</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 41, 243, 259; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 603; Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 125.

opened its factory in 1742 at Isfahan, but never established itself at Mashhad, by then the capital. England in fact had no diplomatic or consular representatives in Iran during Nadir's reign.<sup>356</sup> Meanwhile, the EIC never recovered its exemption from customs at Bandar 'Abbas, where there was tension with the government over the issue of providing ships for Nadir's navy.<sup>357</sup> The trade in the Gulf became increasingly local, in the hands of Arab merchants, and was disrupted by Nadir's campaigns against Oman from 1735 to 1747, and by revolts in southern Iran after 1744.<sup>358</sup> Another English organization, the Russia Company, obtained the right to trade with Iran via Russia in 1734, but the customs required were later raised from three to seven percent and the agreement was cancelled altogether in 1746. After Nadir's death the company lost goods worth 80,000 pounds sterling and left northern Iran.<sup>359</sup>

The Dutch VOC had, by the 1730s, entered a period of decline on the world scene.<sup>360</sup> At home in the Netherlands they weathered floods, shipworms and the hard winter of 1739-40. Annual India fleets averaged about 30 ships in the 1730s and 1740s, and in 1743 they could still bring back goods worth 15-16 million guilders from the East Indies on exports of 2-3 million in specie.<sup>361</sup> In Iran they faced much the same problems as the English. Three hundred tumans were extorted from them in 1732 and an unspecified amount in 1744; in 1747 Nadir had the Dutch interpreter beaten to death at Kirman over a large sum of money an Iranian notable had deposited with him, while at the port of Bushire rebel forces extracted 6,000 tumans from the company.<sup>362</sup> Nadir also importuned them to supply ships, which they refused, and had two commandeered in 1741 anyway.<sup>363</sup> The extent of their operations in Iran is hard to measure. Some 150 employees, including soldiers, were maintained at their Bandar 'Abbas factory in 1735.<sup>364</sup> An incomplete set of data shows that sugar

<sup>356</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 284-85, 282.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 93-94, 215, 284.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 285-86; Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 232-33.

<sup>359</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 250 note 1, 289-90.

<sup>360</sup> Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient*, 334; Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 71-72.

<sup>361</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 70-71, 83, citing an anonymous English writer, *A Description of Holland, or the present state of the United Provinces* (London, 1743).

<sup>362</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 603; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 243, 259; Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 128.

<sup>363</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 93-94, 215.

<sup>364</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 603.

exports from Java to Iran picked up in the early 1730s, fluctuating widely between 92,000 and 613,000 lbs. a year from 1730-34.<sup>365</sup> Overall, in Lockhart's view, the Dutch "fared no better than their British rivals during these troubled times."<sup>366</sup> A reasonable inference is that their commerce made a partial comeback from the cessation of trade in the 1720s to a very modest level much below the peak Safavid years.

The French *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* made a typically ill-timed effort to enter the trade at Bandar 'Abbas in 1740, but were harried by Taqi Khan, the governor of Fars, who confiscated one of their ships and held its captain for ransom. Their agent also died there. By 1743 they had left the port, though "French vessels continued to call at irregular intervals and to carry on some trade with the merchants at Gombroon and Bushire."<sup>367</sup>

## V. Iran under Karim Khan Zand, 1750-1779

### V.A. Overview of the Period

After Nadir's death in 1747 his grandiose empire fragmented. Political power decentralized rapidly as his variegated armed forces melted away to their homes or tried to impose themselves in suitable niches around the former kingdom. Ahmad Shah Abdali broke away and set up an independent Afghan state based at Herat and Qandahar. In the Caspian area the Qajars gained control of Mazandaran and Astarabad, while the local notable Hedayat Khan (or Hedayat Allah) ruled Gilan. Azerbaijan came under the sway of one of Nadir's generals, Azad Khan, an Afghan. Kurds in the north and west, Arabs in the south and Baluchis in the southeast all adopted independent stances, avoiding paying tribute to the "central" government.<sup>368</sup>

In turbulent Khorasan, where Nadir's capital had been, the victorious rebel 'Ali Quli (Nadir's nephew) ruled for one year as 'Adel Shah before being deposed and blinded by his brother Ibrahim

<sup>365</sup> Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740*, 165 table 32.

<sup>366</sup> Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 286.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>368</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 105-07.

who was himself soon executed by supporters of Nadir's grandson Shahrukh. At the end of 1749 Shahrukh's officers mutinied and blinded him, crowning a grandson of Sultan Husayn as Shah Sulayman II Safavi in his place. In February 1750 another Afshar conspiracy returned the unseeing Shahrukh to the throne. At this point the Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded Khorasan and after briefly deposing Shahrukh yet again, reinstated him as ruler of northeastern Iran, now an Afghan vassal, a position he would maintain until the rise of the Qajars in 1796.<sup>369</sup>

The real struggle for power was occurring elsewhere, however, and was even more complex. At Isfahan in 1750 a coalition of Iranian tribes (Bakhtiyaris, Kurds and Lurs, including the Zands, a small sub-group associated with either of the latter two) proclaimed a minor Safavid prince as Shah Isma'il III. The power behind this façade lay in a triumvirate consisting of two rival Bakhtiyari chiefs, 'Ali Mardan Khan and Abu'l Fath Khan, and Karim Khan Zand, who had served in Nadir's army. By 1751, Karim Khan alone exercised a tenuous control of most of central and southern Iran, as 'Ali Mardan Khan eliminated Abu'l Fath Khan and was in turn killed by one of his own supporters.<sup>370</sup>

The period from 1751 to 1758 witnessed a bloody contest for all of Iran among Karim Khan, Muhammad Hasan Khan Qajar in the Caspian area, and Azad Khan Afghan in Azerbaijan. In 1752 the Qajars defeated Karim Khan who had ventured to the borders of Mazandaran. Karim retreated first to Isfahan, then to Shiraz under further pressure from Azad Khan. But in early 1753 with Arab tribal support he defeated the latter, and when the Qajars took Gilan and Mazandaran from Azad Khan in 1756 the defeated commander entered Karim's service. After 1757 the Zand-Qajar confrontation began. Isfahan fell to the Qajars that year but their brutal behavior there strengthened support for Karim. In the summer of 1757 a Qajar siege of Karim at Shiraz failed and they had to fall back on Mazandaran. In 1758 Muhammad Hasan Khan was defeated and killed by a Zand army in Mazandaran.<sup>371</sup>

<sup>369</sup> Perry, "The Last Safavids, 1722-1773," 65; Lockhart, *Nadir Shah*, 264-65.

<sup>370</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 108; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 13-32. Minorovsky refers to Karim Khan as of Kurdish origin: *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 137 note 2.

<sup>371</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 109-21; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 32-96. The phrase on "repairing the broken circle of justice" in the next paragraph is from Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 227.

By 1764 Karim Khan held all of Iran, except Khorasan under Shahrukh and in the northwest, parts of northern Azerbaijan and Shirvan under Turcoman and Lezghi chiefs, eastern Armenia and Georgia under its king Erekle (see Map 3.2 in Appendix II). From 1765 to his death in 1779 followed a welcome period of stable rule under Karim Khan based at Shiraz, who devoted himself to "repairing the broken circle of justice," with positive consequences for development (however temporary) which we shall now consider.

#### V.B. Internal Political, Economic and Cultural Changes, 1747-79

**Politics and the state.** Karim Khan ruled Iran as "an intermediary between the people and a purely symbolic monarchy," first assuming the title *vakil al-dawla* ("representative of the government") while the nominal shah, the Safavid Isma'il III was kept in the prison fortress of Abada between Shiraz and Isfahan until his death in 1773. Already in 1765 Karim had changed his own title to *vakil al-ra'aya* ("representative of the people"), and quietly let both the Safavid absolute monarchy and Nadir's imperial tyranny fade into the background. While he ostensibly never called himself shah, he was *de facto* king of Iran after 1773, and a verse on the blade of his sword read: "This blade, that takes for prey the lion of the Zodiac/is the sword of the *vakil*, that conquering king [*an shah-i keshvargir*]." Still, his reluctance to appoint a successor would open the door to another debilitating round of tribal civil wars after his death in 1779.<sup>372</sup>

Karim similarly ruled with a less elaborate institutional framework than had his predecessors. The bureaucracy was kept small—though the high Safavid offices are still referred to, there was no council of state. The court of Shiraz consisted of some 8,000 people, most of them escorts, attendants, servants, heralds, couriers and sweepers.<sup>373</sup> The court and the army were kept separate, with military commanders drawn from among Karim's relatives and other tribal leaders. The standing army stood theoretically at 45,000 men, of which 24,000 came from the Lur and Lak tribes, 6,000

<sup>372</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 215-20, 294; Perry, "The Last Safavids, 1722-1773," 67-68.

<sup>373</sup> Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 124-25; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 217, 280.

from Fars, and 3,000 were Bakhtiyaris. The actual army was much smaller, less than 20,000 in Perry's estimation, perhaps as few as 4,000 by the late 1760s. Though there were some Georgian officers, the steady stream of tribute and "slaves" which the Safavids relied on had ceased, as had Nadir's use of Central Asian Uzbek and Afghan warriors.<sup>374</sup> These streamlined civil and military instruments of state proved generally more efficient and practical than Safavid magnificence of scale or Nadir's strictly military emphasis would have.

Provincial governors tended to be drawn from among Karim's relatives and the local elites. A system of keeping relatives of provincial governors as "hostages" at court to vouch for their good behavior and the use of marriage alliances were employed more than force and the threat of dismissal as in the recent past.<sup>375</sup> Due to the difficulties imposed by communications and tribal independence, these governors were sometimes rather autonomous in their administration, in some cases only quite nominally under central control. Given such limitations, administration seems to have been comparatively efficient and just at the provincial and urban level.<sup>376</sup> Impressive also, in that it was achieved without the use of crushing "extraordinary" taxes or widespread deployment of the army, was the total state tax revenue, at about 535,000 tumans, perhaps two-thirds of the late Safavids' income.<sup>377</sup> Characteristically, Karim is said to have left only 7,000 tumans unspent in his treasury at death, implying a fiscal policy of returning state income to the economy rather than unproductively hoarding it (by contrast Nadir left 7.5 million tumans in his treasury).<sup>378</sup> Such policies account for Karim's remarkable popularity in the public imagination, as the traveller William Francklin found in 1786: "... nor is his name ever mentioned by them, especially the middling and lower classes of people, but in terms expressive of the highest gratitude and esteem."<sup>379</sup>

<sup>374</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 213, 279-80.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 218-19; Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 125; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 672.

<sup>376</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 235, 241. One new office that reflected this was the local *vakil al-ra'aya*, a "workers' and peasants' ombudsman": *ibid.*, 233.

<sup>377</sup> Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 126, based on Asaf, *Rustam al-tavarikh*, 321-22. The biggest contributions were from Shiraz (160,000), Isfahan (70,000), Azerbaijan (60,000) and Persian Iraq (60,000).

<sup>378</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 229, 293.

<sup>379</sup> William Francklin, *Observations made on a tour from Bengal to Persia in the years 1786-7* (London, 1790), 108, cited by Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 120.

**The economy.** With the renewed civil wars the 1750s brought very great hardship once again to the population, particularly in the urban sector, with its nearby village peasantry. Each time a town fell to one side or another, a set sum would be exacted by the victors: twelve cities are known to have paid a total of 350,000 tumans to 'Ali Mardan, Azad, Karim and Muhammad Hasan, and as twenty towns in all were besieged and taken in the decade, some 700,000 tumans may have been levied, equal to ten times the annual revenue of Isfahan.<sup>380</sup> In 1754 Bishop Sebastian lamented that at Isfahan, "impositions were so great that they are selling men, women, boys and girls like oxen, sheep, and horses."<sup>381</sup> A natural reaction to this by those who could manage it was migration, to India, Ottoman Iraq and Yemen. Some 100,000 Iranians were estimated to be living as refugees in Baghdad and the shrine towns of Iraq by 1758, while Basra was two-thirds populated by refugees.<sup>382</sup>

In the 1760s and 1770s an economic recovery in central, western and southern Iran began to reverse these trends. By 1763 a Dominican at Julfa could report "'all Persia, and Isfahan in particular, quiet, and well provided' (with food) 'thanks to the prudent rule of Karim Khan'."<sup>383</sup> Karim endeavored to re-establish trade and agriculture by efforts to maintain safety on the roads, invitations to merchants to return, public building and infrastructural projects and, most importantly, moderate levels of taxation. The exodus of 1742-58 ended as the populations of Isfahan, Shiraz, Qom and elsewhere revived, perhaps doubling by the 1770s from the very low levels of the 1740s.<sup>384</sup> State granaries were constructed in the provinces for military campaigns, but in times of crop failure as in the middle and late 1770s the granary at Isfahan was thrown open to relieve the hunger of the poor and additional grain was brought to Shiraz and sold at 100-200 dinars per mann-i tabriz, despite a cost of 1,400 to bring it from Ray, Qazvin and Azerbaijan.<sup>385</sup> Karim Khan is supposed to have said:

<sup>380</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 226.

<sup>381</sup> Letter of January 14, 1754 from Basra, in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 660.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, 671.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 662, letter of April 18, 1763.

<sup>384</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 238, for the increases, but see *ibid.*, 230, for the low levels of specific towns such as Isfahan, Tabriz and Shiraz compared to the mid-seventeenth century (Table 2.7 in Chapter Two).

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 241; Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 128-29, based on Asaf, *Rustam al-tavarikh*, 421-22.

We have a common duty [*vazifa-i 'ammi*] towards all the people of Iran. This we have fulfilled by ordering foodstuffs, clothing and the necessities of the people to be bought and sold at very low prices so that every hired man [*ajiri*] who receives 300 *dinars* a day, which is the price of 12 *mann-i tabriz* wheat or 24 *mann-i tabriz* barley or 40 *mann-i tabriz* millet, which is sufficient for him and his family for one month, will have enough.<sup>386</sup>

Though the value of the tuman continued to drop, from 2.5 pounds sterling in the 1740s to 1.875 in the 1760s,<sup>387</sup> the new Bishop of Isfahan verified in 1763 that "living is cheap."<sup>388</sup> Trade and manufacturing likewise revived and cities and regions resumed production of their specialties: swordblades in Qazvin and Qom; silks and carpets at Kashan; leather and felt in Hamadan; glass at Maragheh; silk, opium and lead at Yazd; goats' wool, copper, iron, gunpowder and matchlocks in Kirman; cereals, tobacco, opium, wine and dried fruits from Fars; textiles and metalwork at Isfahan.<sup>389</sup>

This upswing was marked, but must not be exaggerated; it was relative to the collapse that lasted from 1722 to 1760. Thus the Dominican Father de Bernardis said of Julfa in 1769: "Here the folk are poor and wretched both in numbers and in worldly goods, but we have quiet in matters of religion."<sup>390</sup> Evidence of rebuilding on the basis of great prior human and economic dislocation is suggested by the further experience of the Armenian community at Julfa:

... the surviving landowners of Julfa in 1770 drafted an agreement to demolish buildings beyond repair and plant the sites with vineyards, and to share out and cultivate abandoned fields among themselves and any new arrivals, making provision for the reimbursement of returning claimants.<sup>391</sup>

Yazd and Kirman both declined from their former role as important commercial centers, while a city like Mashhad, outside Karim's sphere of influence, stagnated economically, culturally and politically.<sup>392</sup>

<sup>386</sup> Asaf, *Rustam al-tavarikh*, 309, cited and translated by Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 122.

<sup>387</sup> Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals and Seals of the Shāhs of Irān, 1500-1941*, table IV between pp. 18 and 19; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, xi.

<sup>388</sup> Mgr. Cornelius of St. Joseph, letter from Basra dated July 5, 1763, in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 663.

<sup>389</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 247.

<sup>390</sup> Letter of December 20, 1769, from Julfa, in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 669.

<sup>391</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 240.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, 244, 247.

The most dynamic center of the period was the new capital at Shiraz which well illustrates the economic upturn. Here Karim engaged in extensive building projects (see Map 3.3 in Appendix II). New bazaars, caravanserais, public baths, palaces and mosques were erected; important shrines were embellished and restored. Underground water reservoirs were built and streets in the bazaar and residential neighborhoods were paved, with wells and a central drainage channel. Most of these works were made sturdily enough to withstand earthquakes in 1789, 1812, 1853 and 1855.<sup>393</sup> Twelve thousand workers labored in 1767-69 to make the city more compact behind less lengthy but stronger walls, 25 feet high with a ditch 20 feet wide by 50 deep. Forced labor was not used; instead the work force was paid in cash from the royal treasury and entertained by musicians! So many architects, masons, tile-workers, painters and other craftspeople were brought in from the provinces that they were said by a chronicler to outnumber the local population.<sup>394</sup> There continued to be royal workshops in the manufacturing sector; though these were less extensive than in Safavid times, there were significant textile and glass-making workshops, presumably in both the royal and private sectors.<sup>395</sup> There was a special quarter for prostitutes, frequented by the army, citizens, court and its guests. Edward Scott Waring, who was in Shiraz a generation later reports

... that dancing girls and prostitutes were carefully classified and registered and were replaced when claimed by death or marriage; and that as a class they were the most heavily taxed and thus played a productive part in the economic as well as the social scheme of the Zand metropolis.<sup>396</sup>

Minorities were well-treated—Karim employed Armenians as commercial agents again, though more were involved in viticulture and wine-making. Jews, whose numbers in Iran may have fallen by 20,000 since 1747, returned to give Shiraz the largest Jewish population in Iran: "They appeared to be living in relative poverty in 1765, but were not subject to direct persecution until after the Vakil's death."<sup>397</sup> According to Waring, the city was politically calm as a result of Karim's good

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, 277-78; Cl. Huart, "Karīm Khān Zand," p. 762 in M. Th. Houtsma *et al.*, editors, *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1927), 762.

<sup>394</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 272-74.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, 243; Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 615.

<sup>396</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 287, based on Edward Scott Waring, *A Tour to Sheeraz* (London, 1807), 80.

<sup>397</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 240; Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 122.

government: "During his whole reign, I have been informed by several natives of Shiraz, that by his excellent police and management there was not a single tumult or riot productive of bloodshed."<sup>398</sup>

The agrarian sector would seem to have shared in the general return to better times. As the chronicler Muhammad Hashim Asaf reluctantly admitted, "[Karim's] rule was effective and the people well-off under him."<sup>399</sup> Tax levels were reduced and the especially burdensome "extraordinary" taxes and requisitions were eliminated to a great degree.<sup>400</sup> Irrigation works were restored and expanded in Fars and the south.<sup>401</sup> But were the degree of landlord oppression and large share of the surplus really affected? Lambton and Perry both imply that private property ownership increased in terms of both numbers of landlords and size of estates. Leading Zand family members acquired property. Both cite the case of Mirza Muhammad, the *kalantar* of Shiraz, who "bought up dozens of villages in the metropolitan province of Fars during his tenure of office and clearly identified himself with a powerful local landlord class."<sup>402</sup> At his retirement in 1760/61, he controlled "300 plowlands [villages?], mills, gardens, shops, and herds of horses, mules, asses, cattle and sheep."<sup>403</sup> One can infer that the lot of the peasantry was at best one of improvement over the uncertain conditions and prevalent extortion of the preceding four decades to something approaching the "ordinary" low standard of living it had enjoyed under the Safavids.

Tribal conditions were similar to what they had been under Nadir and the Afghans, with a shift mainly in the particular tribes favored by the state. Karim helped organize the Qashqa'i tribe around Shiraz, appointing its first *ilkhan* (tribal chief). Likewise he appointed leaders of the local confederation that would become the Khamseh. He continued to rely on and favor his original Iranian and Kurdish supporters—the Lur, Lak, Zanganah, Vand, Kalkhor and Qaraguzlu (the last four from the

<sup>398</sup> Waring, *A Tour to Sheeraz*, 302, cited by Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 283.

<sup>399</sup> Asaf, *Rustam al-tavarikh*, 62, as summarized by Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 120.

<sup>400</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 228-29; Pigulevskaya et al., *Tarikh-i Iran*, 615.

<sup>401</sup> Pigulevskaya et al., *Tarikh-i Iran*, 615.

<sup>402</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 235; also 236.

<sup>403</sup> Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 121.

Hamadan plains)—using them in his standing army and letting them administer their own regions.<sup>404</sup> Other, less fortunate tribes were scattered to reduce their power, while still others retained independence locally due to the indifference or inadequate coercive means of the central government.<sup>405</sup>

**Political culture.** The ulama were gradually recovering in the 1760s and 1770s from the ravages against their lives and property in Nadir's time. The transition from state patronage and control of *vaqf* land to reliance on kinship networks and bazaar ties for livelihood continued. Karim did appoint and pay the highest religious officials—imam jum'ehs, qazis, sadrs and shaykhs al-islam—but he did not restore pensions to ordinary mullas, sayyids, darvishes and religious students (*talaba*), saying:

We are the *vakil al-dawla-i iran*. We have no money of our own to give to *mullas* and *talaba* ... the *divan* taxes which reach the treasury must be used for the army, to guard the frontiers and administer the country. We will not give anybody anything [for nothing]. We will give wages [*ratiba va mavajib-i mustamarri*] to whoever performs some service to the Persian state.... Every student of the religious sciences, who has 2 *tomans* a year, can live well with a family of seven persons.<sup>406</sup>

Lambton points out that the two *tumans* mentioned compare unfavorably with the nine *tumans* a workman could earn in a year.<sup>407</sup>

Nevertheless, many ulama migrated back to Iran in the 1770s, pushed by the plague and an economic downturn in Iraq.<sup>408</sup> This strengthened the position of the adherents of the *usuli* movement in Iran at the expense of the *akhbari* school. Algar has explained the doctrinal distinction:

Differences between the Akhbaris and Usulis centered upon the related questions of *ijtihad* and *taqlid*—the exercise, by those qualified (the *mujtahids*), of personal judgment in matters touching upon the enactment of religious guidance; and submission to the guidance of such *mujtahids* by those unqualified themselves to exercise personal judgment. The Akhbaris rejected the permissibility of *ijtihad*, even after the occultation of the Imam had deprived the community of its living source of guidance; they held that the entire Shi'i community should continue to submit exclusively to the guidance of the Imam, however remote.<sup>409</sup>

<sup>404</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 225.

<sup>405</sup> Tapper, "Black Sheep, White Sheep and Red Heads," 67.

<sup>406</sup> Asaf, *Rustam al-tavarikh*, 309, cited and translated by Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," 122.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>408</sup> Cole, "Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722-1780," 21.

<sup>409</sup> Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 300.

The triumph of the usuli movement under Aqa Muhammad Baqir Bihbihani in the late eighteenth century laid the foundation for the enhanced authority and prestige of the highest-ranking ulama—the mujtahids—independent of the state, a development whose political repercussions we will follow in the social movements of the late nineteenth century. Popular religiosity was also deepened by the emergence in the Zand period of *ta'ziya* productions—the passion play enacted during the month of Muharram that depicts the martyrdom of Husayn at Karbala in the seventh century.<sup>410</sup> This too would inculcate a political culture with far-reaching emotional undercurrents of self-sacrifice and resistance to oppression.

#### **V.C. Iran's External Relations, 1747-1800**

By the late eighteenth century a significant shift in Iran's external relations appeared to be taking place: the European East India companies were abandoning the Gulf trade to concentrate on exploiting their colonial possessions in India and the Far East, leaving the bulk of Iran's foreign trade with its immediate neighbors—the Ottoman Empire, India, Russia and the Arab tribes and states of the Gulf. As much as 85-90 percent of Iran's trade in 1801 was estimated by Malcolm to be with these partners, and one may assume that in Karim Khan's time from 1765 to 1779 this shift was well under way, if not quite yet so dramatic. As we shall see, however, this did not necessarily mean a lesser role for European commerce in Iran, since Iran's trade with India and the Ottomans was largely a transit trade for European products and imports, while Russia was making a transition of its own into a more significant actor in the European setting.

**Relations with the Ottomans, India, Afghanistan, Gulf Arabs and Russia.** Karim made diplomatic contact with the Ottoman Empire only in 1775, at the latter's initiative, and no agreement was reached before he died. In fact from 1774 to 1784 there were hostilities between the two countries over the Iraqi port city of Basra, and relations remained unstable until the end of the Zand period in the 1790s.<sup>411</sup> Nevertheless, when trade was possible, it amounted to as much as 26 to 35

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, 301; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 222, citing Hasan Naraqi, *Tarikh-i ijtimu'i-yi Kashan* [Social History of Kashan] (Tehran: 1345/1966), 107.

<sup>411</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 253, 256.

percent of Iran's total trade, or some 35 lakhs of rupees, according to Malcolm in 1801.<sup>412</sup> Since 35 lakhs of rupees is equal to about 116,666 tumans or 62,221 pounds sterling, this trade, although respectable, was far below the late Safavid amounts of perhaps 700,000 pounds sterling worth of imports alone from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>413</sup> The trade was moreover to a great extent a transit trade between Europe and India (by 1801): Iran exported Indian indigo, shawls from Kashmir, gold cloth, cotton prints, lambskins, silk, tobacco, saffron, gum ammoniac, cochineal and rhubarb, and imported European manufactured goods, textiles from Aleppo and Damascus and dyestuffs. The balance of trade was in Iran's favor, although Ricks feels this was more true of the 1765-75 period than later.<sup>414</sup>

Commercial and diplomatic relations with India were likewise in a state of flux, as the Mughal Empire continued to disintegrate before external and internal challenges. Haydar 'Ali, ruler of the Deccan, conquered Malabar on India's west coast in 1765 and sent an embassy to Shiraz in 1770, which was reciprocated, and another in 1774. The Indian commercial presence in Iran revived from its low point earlier in the century; Perry notes that Indians came "not only as merchants but as sailors, brokers, bankers, and agents for both Iranian and European merchants."<sup>415</sup> The trade, which may have reached 20 to 30 percent of Iran's foreign commerce by 1801, was largely in India's favor. A report from the 1780s estimates that four-fifths of Iran's imports must be paid for in cash, since silk was not in demand in India.<sup>416</sup>

Karim's relations with the new Dorrani state of Afghanistan were minimal, for political and geographical reasons. The two countries were separated by Shahrukh's vassal state in Khorasan which served as a buffer between them, as did the Lut and Kavir deserts between Karim and Shahrukh. Some trade did occur between the Zand state and the emporia of Mashhad and Herat in Khorasan and Afghanistan respectively.<sup>417</sup>

<sup>412</sup> Compare Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, 264, with Malcolm cited by Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 249.

<sup>413</sup> Conversions based on Minorovsky's rate of 30 rupees to the toman for the seventeenth century (*Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 154), and Perry's rate of 1.875 pounds sterling to the tuman (*Karim Khan Zand*, xi). The Safavid figure for trade with the Ottomans is found in Ferrier, "Trade from the mid-14th Century to the End of the Safavid Period," 489.

<sup>414</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 253; Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 397.

<sup>415</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 271. For the percentage of the trade, compare Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, 263, with Malcolm cited by Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 249.

<sup>416</sup> *Three Reports*, 88.

<sup>417</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 206, 247.

In southern Iran and all around the Persian Gulf, a number of Arab states assumed an independent stance vis-a-vis the Zands, Ottomans and Europeans. The Banu Ka'b had great power in Khuzistan from the 1740s to the 1760s but generally paid tribute to Karim however. Other competing tribes included the Huwalah of Kangan-Tahiri/Bahrayn, the Qawasim of Lingah/Ras al-Khaymah and the Banu Ma'in at Qishm and Hormuz—at times all enjoyed semi-autonomy from Iranian control (see Maps 3.1 and 3.2).<sup>418</sup> Bishop Cornelius at Bushire in 1765 claimed that every port in the Gulf except Bushire was held by an "independent Arab chief."<sup>419</sup> The "pirate" Mir Muhanna overthrew his father Mir Nasir, the Shaykh of Bandar Rig, and expelled the Dutch from Kharg Island, which he ruled from 1766 to 1769 before his own troops overthrew him. When the Zands garrisoned the island shortly afterwards, peace returned to the upper Gulf.<sup>420</sup> Ricks estimates that 60 percent of the trade in foodstuffs at Bandar 'Abbas in the 1750s—primarily cereals, rice and dates—was in the hands of Arab merchants; while Arabs accounted for only 20 percent of non-foodstuffs (textiles, pearls, cotton, wool, copper, iron and lead), these were less important overall.<sup>421</sup> Up to 75 percent of the Gulf trade in the latter stages of the century was carried on by Arab traders working with Armenians, Iranians, Turks and Indians.<sup>422</sup> The volume, however, was presumably much lower than a century before.

Finally, and most significantly, Iran's relations with Russia underwent expansion and change after 1750. No direct Russian contact was made with the Zands until 1784, after Karim's death.<sup>423</sup> Rather, the Russian consul at Rasht with its ports of Enzeli on the Caspian was in the jurisdiction of Hedayat Khan, the semi-independent provincial governor of Gilan from the early 1750s until 1786, while Fath 'Ali Khan at Darband was completely independent.<sup>424</sup> There had existed a royally-regulated company of Russian merchants trading in Iran since 1723, but due to growing pressure

<sup>418</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 269-71, 323, 388.

<sup>419</sup> Letter of May 2, 1765, in *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 664-65.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 670 note 1; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 263.

<sup>421</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 232-33.

<sup>422</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 256.

<sup>423</sup> J. R. Perry, "Review of Iran unter Karim Hân and Die Zand-Dynastie," pp. 184-188 in *Iranian Studies*, volume V, number 4 (Autumn 1972), 187.

<sup>424</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 207-08, 251.

from private traders it was abolished in 1762. The merchants in the Caspian area tended to be Armenians, but after 1750 these were more often Armenians of Russian nationality than Iranian.<sup>425</sup> Russia imported raw silk, but also madder (for red dye), cotton and silk cloths, rice and dried fish, while exports to Iran included iron and steel, paper, sugar and honey, hides, sackcloth, mirrors and bread [?].<sup>426</sup> Trade suffered after 1743 and remained somewhat stagnant through the 1770s. In 1747 a mob plundered the Russian settlement at Rasht and took 2000 tumans' worth of goods. In the 1750s Russian trade totals showed a decline, which reversed itself in the next decade as raw silk exports, in Iranian hands, increased. The 1770s brought another drop, due to Russian wars with the Ottomans in the Caucasus from 1768-74, and more hostility with local khans. In 1774, the Russian consul Yablonski complained, "The period of peace and prosperity in Persia is now past ... in no time at all chaos has set in."<sup>427</sup>

Despite the vicissitudes of these decades a gradually rising trade position for Russia in Iran may be glimpsed. Scattered data show Russian exports worth 81,151 rubles (equal to 8,115 tumans) annually in 1758-60, which increased fourfold by 1792 to 325,310 rubles (equal to 32,531 rubles), still a relatively small amount. Imports in 1758-60 averaged 107,000 rubles (no figures for 1792), so the balance of trade was in Iran's favor.<sup>428</sup> Russia may have accounted for 15 to 20 percent of Iran's total trade by 1801.<sup>429</sup> The directors of the EIC complained in the late 1780s: "In the north, Russia is making rapid strides towards commercial pre-eminence; and at Moscow, Persian silk is sold in large quantities, whilst it is seldom, if ever, seen in London."<sup>430</sup> Russia thus moved slowly toward a position from which it could compete successfully with the Europeans in Iran, and this would be the story of the nineteenth century. A proto-imperialism was developing politically and militarily as well as economically. Russian policy toward Hedayat Khan, Fath 'Ali Khan and Erekle

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, 250-52.

<sup>428</sup> G. I. Ter-Gukasov, *Politicheskie i ekonomicheskie interesy Rossii v Persii* [Political and Economic Interests of Russia in Persia] (Petrograd, 1916), extracts translated pp. 144-146 in Issawi, *EHI*, 145-46. The rate of ten rubles to the tuman (for 1743-48) is found in Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals and Seals of the Shāhs of Irān, 1500-1941*, table IV, between pp. 18 and 19.

<sup>429</sup> Compare Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, 264, with Malcolm cited by Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 249.

<sup>430</sup> *Three Reports*, 89.

II of Georgia became more aggressive. In 1781 Count Voinovich attempted to garrison a force in the Bay of Astarabad, bringing him into conflict with the emerging Qajar state, while in 1783 Russia assumed "military and political responsibility for Georgia's survival," alarmed by growing Qajar power.<sup>431</sup> This clash would develop into several wars in the first third of the nineteenth century.

**Relations with the Europeans.** Karim Khan was generally "pro-trade," and as the opening of his grant to the English EIC in 1763 described him, "desirous that the said Kingdoms [of Persia] should flourish and re-obtain their ancient grandeur by the increase of trade and commerce, as well as by a due execution of justice." Thus the Europeans enjoyed a preferential customs rate of at most three percent at Bushire, compared to Iranians, Arabs and other Middle Easterners who paid seven to ten percent there.<sup>432</sup> But, interested as he was in the economic well-being of his realm, Karim was concerned that Iran's commerce in the Gulf entailed a negative balance of trade which drained specie out of the country, and as we shall see, these two tendencies—the desire to promote commerce, the need to prevent a shortage of money—made for far from smooth relations with the English, Dutch and French in this period.

A second major trade issue was the great downturn in silk production and exports, now a confirmed trend since the 1720s, and one which led directly to the negative balance of trade. The importance of the Ottoman Levant ports, which in the seventeenth century had handled the bulk of Iranian silk, declined dramatically by the later eighteenth century, as India, China and Italy came to provide most of Europe's raw silk needs. The proportion of Levant trade in France's overall commerce fell from 50 percent in the late sixteenth century to five percent by the 1780s; for England it fell from ten percent in parts of the seventeenth century to less than one percent in the 1770s.<sup>433</sup> Some of Gilan's lower output now went north to Russia, as we have seen; less of it went overland to the Mediterranean, and almost none went south to the Gulf. This put pressure on both Karim Khan and the Europeans to find some other pattern of trade; the failure to accomplish this ended in

<sup>431</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 212, 252.

<sup>432</sup> "Grant of Special Privileges at Bushire to the (British) East India Company," pp. 52-54 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, for the text; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 248, for the tariff differentials.

<sup>433</sup> Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East, 1580-1780," 199, 204-06.

the temporary eclipse of a European commercial presence in the Gulf on the eve of the nineteenth century.

The English became the most important European actors in the last half of the eighteenth century, now definitively replacing the Dutch. In 1751 the EIC exported 45,000 pounds sterling worth of goods to the Gulf, mostly to Bandar 'Abbas—fully one-fourth of their total exports to the East.<sup>434</sup> British export items included woolen goods, linen from India, lead and tin, while raw silk and wool, and copper were leading imports from Iran, in addition to smaller amounts of carpets, fruit, wine, nuts, pearls, dried fish, dyestuffs, horses, mules and even Persian cats.<sup>435</sup> At times Bandar 'Abbas was connected not only with Kirman and Yazd in its hinterland but attracted traders from as far away as Mashhad and Uzbek Urganj near the Aral Sea.<sup>436</sup> The key item was Kirmani wool, which achieved quite sizable export levels of 50-80,000 lbs. in certain years in the 1750s (though down from the 100,000+ lbs. of the 1730s).<sup>437</sup> This prosperity came to an end in the early 1760s as tribal civil wars among the Zands, coastal shaykhs and khans of the interior, and local peasant uprisings cut off wool exports.<sup>438</sup> The EIC Gombroon Diary for February 28, 1760 attests:

This Kingdom seems to be hastening on very fast to its Destruction, the men in Power have little or no Consideration for the subject; they only think how to satisfy the Soldier and those who immediately serve them; the Consequences of which must be the Ruin of Trade.<sup>439</sup>

The English made a gradual retreat from the interior of the country: their Isfahan factory did not reopen after 1747 and they left Kirman in 1758, except for a linguist (interpreter) who remained into the 1760s.<sup>440</sup> They gave up positions in the Gulf as well, in 1757 abandoning a factory which they had established at Bandar Rig three years before and in October 1759 the factory at Bandar 'Abbas was bombarded and almost completely destroyed by the French in an action that was part of the

<sup>434</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 257.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>436</sup> Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean*, 169, based on Factory Records, March 26, 1753.

<sup>437</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 222. For slightly different figures which reflect the same general trend see Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 418, Appendix H.

<sup>438</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 252; Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 309-13, 418.

<sup>439</sup> Cited by Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 227.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 258.

Seven Years' War.<sup>441</sup> In 1763, after a year of no reported trade, the EIC's agent closed the settlement at Bandar 'Abbas; it had been cut off from Kirmani wool and no one would or could come from the interior to buy English goods.<sup>442</sup>

The EIC was installed the same year at the Gulf port of Bushire, much closer to Karim's capital at Shiraz. They received a royal grant that exempted them from customs duties and road tolls, gave them the monopoly of woolen imports into Iran, and allowed them to establish factories wherever they wished. In return they were asked to observe certain conditions, including that they buy from the "principal Merchants and Men of Credit" (i.e. Iranians), hand over rebels and not assist "the King's Enemies." Most importantly,

... the English, according to what was formerly customary, shall purchase from the Persian merchants such goods as will answer for sending to England or India, provided they and the Persians shall agree on reasonable prices for the same, and not export from Persia the whole amount of their sales in ready money, as this will impoverish the Kingdom and in the end prejudice trade in general.<sup>443</sup>

At first the move to Bushire augured well: from 1763 to 1767 woolen sales averaged 1,606 bales, compared with 867 for 1753 to 1762. Bushire accounted for one-fifth of all EIC sales in the East in these years.<sup>444</sup> There was a concomitant upturn of trade internally from Shiraz to Isfahan and up to the Russian border.<sup>445</sup> Later in the 1760s however difficulties arose over English recalcitrance in assisting Iranian operations against the Gulf pirates and a perception that Karim opposed all export of specie from Iran (thus putting an effective limit on British imports). Matters were exacerbated by the personal antipathy between Karim and the company's agent at Basra, Henry Moore. Karim, angered by one embassy which brought unsuitable presents and refused to provide clothing requested for his army is said to have asked what use the English were to the country; Moore complained of Karim Khan "telling us he wants not our commerce, that it only impoverishes his Kingdom, that no specie

<sup>441</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 663 note 2.

<sup>442</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 293.

<sup>443</sup> Treaty text from Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, I, 54; see also *ibid.*, 53; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 260; Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 339.

<sup>444</sup> Figures are averaged from Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 417, Appendix G. Perry calculates slightly different totals and gives the proportion of EIC sales: *Karim Khan Zand*, 260.

<sup>445</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 260.

shall be exported."<sup>446</sup>

Curzon has observed that towards the close of the eighteenth century the EIC had won their almost 200-year battle against the Dutch,<sup>447</sup> but this is not the whole picture. From 1750 to 1770 English exports to the Gulf had averaged 47,000 pounds sterling, some one-sixth of all EIC exports to the East, and about 15 percent of the trade conducted in the Gulf.<sup>448</sup> These numbers declined by about *ten times* in the period from 1770 to 1775, after the falling out with Karim.<sup>449</sup> When plague forced the English from Basra in 1773 and an Iranian siege reduced the city's importance in the Gulf in 1775, the EIC saw its activities cut to virtually nothing by 1779. In the 1780s' report on commerce, Basra and Bushire had net losses on the slim volume of sales they conducted. A small Gulf trade continued but it was no longer being carried by the EIC, and it moved from Bushire, Bandar 'Abbas and Basra to Kuwait and Mascat in Oman.<sup>450</sup> The late eighteenth century thus proved to be a lull before the storm of increased commercial relations broke in the nineteenth.

The Dutch, on their more modest scale, followed a trajectory in the late eighteenth-century Gulf trade somewhat similar in its rise and fall. Like the English they too abandoned their factories in Isfahan, Kirman and Bandar 'Abbas in the turbulent 1750s. Their search for a secure trading post in the Gulf led them first to Basra, where they were pressured to leave in 1753 by the extortions of the local authorities. Then a year later under Baron Knipphausen, they simply occupied Kharg Island, which they developed and administered "complete with fort, fields, Europeans, Chinese labor and African peasantry."<sup>451</sup> Here they enjoyed a brief period of flourishing trade, with net profits rising dramatically from 18,771 florins in 1755-56 to 165,808 in 1758-59. They were involved in pearl fishing as well as the conventional import and export trade, and the Baron proposed to expand their operations by seizing Bahrayn across the Gulf.<sup>452</sup> Instead, an equally dramatic collapse of the Dutch

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 264; see also 261-63; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 668-69.

<sup>447</sup> Lord G. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1892), volume II, 550-51, cited by Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 206.

<sup>448</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 210; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 256.

<sup>449</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 417, Appendix G.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 392; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand* 261-67; *Three Reports*, 87.

<sup>451</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 273; *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 689-92.

<sup>452</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 269; Pigulevskaya *et al.*, *Tarikh-i Iran*, 615.

position ensued when the pirate Mir Muhanna took Kharg after a nine-day siege on January 1, 1766, capturing 200 guns and some "four million" in merchandise and money.<sup>453</sup> This defeat effectively ended the Dutch presence in the Gulf. Though ships, bullion and men would continue to make their way to the Far East until the 1780s, the Dutch East India Company had entered its final phase of decline in the world system. The end came in May 1798 when its dissolution was decreed by the new republican regime of the Netherlands; the VOC's debts then stood at 134 million florins, its capital at only 6,400,000.<sup>454</sup>

The French continued to concentrate commercially far more on the Levant trade with the Ottomans than the Gulf trade with Iran, and the proportion of their commerce in the Mediterranean markets dropped about tenfold by the 1780s though some silk was still imported. From time to time they did appear in the Gulf, as their naval bombardment of the English factory at Bandar 'Abbas in 1759 made evident. Basing themselves at Ottoman-held Basra, they carried on very little trade in the 1760s and 1770s, preoccupied mostly with the balance of power in Europe as affected by the weakening governments in the Ottoman Empire and India. Their one foray into contact with Iran was a by now typical mixture of grand hopes and slight materialization: in 1768-70 they negotiated an agreement with Karim to provide two million articles of clothing annually [!] for the army, to be paid half in cash and half in silk, while Karim promised them Kharg Island. Neither side was serious about executing its side of the agreement however, and contacts became sporadic immediately after, ceasing altogether later in the 1770s.<sup>455</sup>

## VI. The Rise of the Qajar Dynasty, 1779-1797

A number of factors combined to bring a new dynasty, the Qajars, to a position of what would prove to be long-lasting political power in Iran by the turn of the nineteenth century. Political, ideological and economic causes were at work, mostly internal in origin, and to a lesser degree external

<sup>453</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, 667. No unit is specified for the booty taken at Kharg.

<sup>454</sup> Boxer, *Jan Compagnie*, 76-102.

<sup>455</sup> Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 268-69; Davis, "English Imports from the Middle East, 1580-1780," 205; *Three Reports*, 89.

as well. The Zands revealed considerable disunity after Karim's death in 1779. His reticence to clearly claim the monarchy from the now defunct Safavids and attendant omission to designate a successor, coupled with a merciful nature that left several of his family members alive and with their sight intact, created a situation where the Zands consumed each other in deadly infighting for the throne. The Qajars, though historically divided into two branches, were forcefully united by a single claimant for power, Aqa Muhammad. Located in the more populous north and situated closely to Iran's growing commercial partner, Russia, the Qajars were able to eventually mobilize a more dynamic economic and human resource base, while the Zands found themselves in a less populous south, with a more fractious tribal situation and vastly diminished ties to a world economy, partly the result of Karim's ultimate spurning of the East India companies and the decline of trade in the Gulf. The sum of these advantages was a more efficient Qajar military machine, which was aided at several junctures by fortuitous outcomes in key encounters. A final social base was added when a merchant/administrator of Shiraz, Hajji Ibrahim, judged that the Qajars and not the Zands held the best hopes for a stable future. The course of events, as we shall see, was influenced and determined by the momentum generated by these several trends.

Aqa Muhammad Qajar was the son of Muhammad Hasan Qajar whom Karim's army had defeated and eliminated in 1758. His grandfather was Fath 'Ali Khan Qajar who was killed by order of Tahmasp in 1726 when Nadir replaced him as the leading Safavid commander in the drive to expel the Afghans. He himself had been castrated by 'Adel Shah, Nadir's successor, in 1747, since he was the eldest son of a rival (though the normal practice would have been to blind him). When Karim defeated the Qajars in 1758, Aqa Muhammad and his brother fled and lived among the Yamut Turcomans until they gave themselves up to Karim in 1771. Karim made the brother governor of Damghan, but dispatched an army which killed him when he revolted. Aqa Muhammad resided at Karim's court where he was able to observe the family infighting and the military state of the empire, and upon Karim's death he immediately fled north to the Qajar homeland of Astarabad. From 1779 to 1783 he consolidated his hold as leader of the Qajars, expanding his territorial jurisdiction to include the neighboring Caspian province of Mazandaran.<sup>456</sup>

<sup>456</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 167-80. On the origins and earlier history of the Qajar tribe, see *ibid.*, 126-67, and Reid, "The Qajar Uymaq in The Safavid Period, 1500-1722," 124-30.

During this same period the Zands were fighting among themselves at Shiraz. By 1781 four different men had held the throne. First, Karim's half-brother Zaki Khan ruled in the name of Karim's second son, Muhammad 'Ali. He killed various of his relatives and extorted from the population and was killed for his atrocities by his own bodyguards in the same year, 1779. Karim's eldest son, 'Abu'l Fath, was proclaimed shah, but his uncle, Karim's brother Sadiq, blinded him shortly after. Sadiq was opposed by Zaki's nephew, 'Ali Murad, who won the throne after a two-year struggle and eight-month blockade of Shiraz in 1782. He killed all of Sadiq's family except one son, Ja'far Khan, who was 'Ali Murad's own half-brother. In the fall of 1782 a Zand army entered Mazandaran and was defeated by the Qajars, falling back on Tehran. The next year 'Ali Murad attacked Mazandaran again, briefly occupying Sari, Aqa Muhammad's capital. Pursuing the Qajars towards Astarabad, the Zand forces got split up and routed, causing a panicky retreat from Sari to Tehran. Thus did a major Zand opportunity come to nothing, leaving Aqa Muhammad secure thereafter in Mazandaran.<sup>457</sup>

By 1784-85 the situation was one of dual competing tribal states in Iran, the Qajars in the north and the Zands in the south. 'Ali Murad Zand died in early spring 1785; his half-brother Ja'far Khan claimed the throne at Isfahan and blinded 'Ali Murad's son Shaykh Vays. A number of Zand tribal supporters—the Qaraguzlu, as well as followers of Ahmad Khan Afghan in Azerbaijan—declared their independence, weakening the Zands militarily. Ja'far needed the aid of Hajji Ibrahim, a leading merchant, to secure Shiraz from 'Ali Murad's nephew, Sayyid Murad Khan. Hajji Ibrahim was made *kalantar* of Shiraz and Fars for his efforts. Ja'far abandoned Isfahan in 1785 when he heard that Aqa Muhammad's Qajar forces had reached Kashan, 100 miles south of Tehran. The Qajars entered Isfahan in May 1785 but could hold the city for only 45 days, harassed by local Bakhtiyari tribesmen. Aqa Muhammad then went to Hamadan where he secured the neutrality of the *vali* of Kurdistan, Khusro Khan, in the coming showdown. From 1786 to 1789 both sides consolidated their forces in anticipation of this. The Qajars continued to make progress, occupying Isfahan

<sup>457</sup> These events are chronicled by Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 179-85, and Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 296-98, who provides a useful genealogical table of the various Zand contenders.

permanently in 1788, while on the other side Ja'far Khan Zand was poisoned in 1789 in a conspiracy led by Sayyid Murad Khan. Lutf 'Ali Khan, Ja'far's son, assembled a mostly Arab army at Bushire, and aided by forces at Shiraz again led by Hajji Ibrahim, deposed Sayyid Murad Khan, killed him and became shah.<sup>458</sup>

Lutf 'Ali's jurisdiction in 1789 was limited to Fars, parts of Khuzistan and the area north of Bushire. Kirman and Yazd proffered nominal allegiance but were locally ruled. His army numbered about 20,000 men. Shiraz, economically in good shape, was his main base. The Qajar territories in 1789 included Astarabad, Mazandaran, Tehran, Isfahan and east to Hamadan, plus an alliance with the ruler of Kurdistan. Aqa Muhammad's army was "well in excess" of 20,000. By 1790 he had taken control of Azerbaijan, none of whose tribal leaders nor the merchants who administered Tabriz could successfully oppose him. At Shiraz, meanwhile, dissension erupted between Lutf 'Ali and his influential kalantar, Hajji Ibrahim. When Lutf 'Ali went to meet the Qajar army near Isfahan in 1791, Hajji Ibrahim's supporters in the Zand army deserted and Lutf 'Ali had to flee to Bushire after Hajji Ibrahim denied him entry into Shiraz.<sup>459</sup> Helfgott points out that Hajji Ibrahim acted both to save himself and out of a class-inspired motive: as a merchant he wanted stable rule in Iran, and by 1791 he could see that the Qajars were more likely to provide this than the Zands. According to Malcolm, a decade later (circa 1800),

In his conversations with me upon the reasons which influenced his conduct at this period, Hajji Ibrāhīm always declared, that a desire to save his country from the continual petty wars with which it was afflicted, was one of the principal motives. 'None,' said he, 'except some plundering soldiers, cared whether a Zand or a Qajar was upon the throne; but all desired that Persia should be great and powerful, and enjoy internal tranquillity.'<sup>460</sup>

Thus Hajji Ibrahim, who would go on to serve as Aqa Muhammad's chief minister, was a pivotal participant from the merchant/bureaucratic class in the otherwise tribal civil war between Qajars and Zands.

<sup>458</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 186-91; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 299.

<sup>459</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 193-98.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 199, citing Malcolm, *History of Persia* (London: Longman and Co., 1825 edition), volume II, 183 note.

The final encounter lasted from 1791 to 1794. In 1792 Lutf 'Ali defeated one Qajar army with his Arab forces; Aqa Muhammad then marched personally against him with an army of 30,000. Camped 60 miles north of Shiraz, Lutf 'Ali made one last daring night raid on the Qajar positions, almost capturing Aqa Muhammad, who regrouped the next day, and then marched into Shiraz. For three years Lutf 'Ali fought a hopeless rearguard action, from Kirman to Yazd and ever eastward toward Baluchistan. In November 1794 he was betrayed and captured at Bam, then taken to Tehran and executed. The remaining Zand family members were hunted down and mutilated or killed by Aqa Muhammad; by the early nineteenth century little trace of the tribe remained. The Zand strongholds of southern Iran were taught a bloody lesson—at Kirman all adult males were killed (some 900) or blinded (3,500-7,000), all women and children were made slaves of the army.<sup>461</sup>

After a brutal campaign in the Caucasus in 1795 on which the Georgian capital of Tiflis was sacked and burned and 16,000 people enslaved, Aqa Muhammad was ready to proclaim himself shah. This he did at his camp on the Mughan plain in early 1796, reaffirming his nephew Baba Khan (the son of Aqa Muhammad's dead brother) as heir apparent and Hajji Ibrahim as chief minister. He then marched into Khorasan, where the local Turcoman chiefs submitted or fled to Afghanistan. Nadir's grandson, the blind Shahrukh, was tortured to disclose the location of his wealth and died at Tehran. Instead of moving into Central Asia, Aqa Muhammad had to hurry back to the Caucasus which the Russians had entered. In May 1797 he was killed in camp by two servants whom he had sentenced to death for a minor offence (reminiscent of Nadir, Malcolm says that Aqa Muhammad bordered on insanity at the time of his death).<sup>462</sup> But Iran was territorially intact—except for the Caucasus and Afghanistan it was at its Safavid borders—and when the heir apparent took the throne as Fath 'Ali Shah, ruling till 1834, the Qajars had established their dynasty.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, 200-03; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 300-01.

<sup>462</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 204-12; he cites Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1825 edition), volume II, 300.

## VII. A Brief Comparative Note

The most obvious comparative dimension to the experience of the Safavids is with that of their neighbors, the Ottomans in Turkey and the Mughals in India.<sup>463</sup> In terms of social structure I think all three of these major Islamic empires had basically the same modes of production and classes identified in Diagram 2.1, but in different proportions. Iran above all was far more tribal, so that both India and the Ottomans were more peasant and in the case of India at least, more urban in structure. The impact of the newly expanding European economy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was likewise somewhat different in each of the three. India was the most easily penetrated because it had important coastal port cities that were economically linked to the hinterland beyond. The Ottomans had commercial ties with the Mediterranean countries, but more importantly, as the border of the Islamic world with Europe and as a state based on a logic of military expansion, they engaged in warfare rather more than trade with Europe. In this period Iran did get involved in the world trade, primarily exchanging its silk for Asian spices brought by the Europeans, but this had little impact on its social structure, and was both more difficult to conduct since the population centers were in the interior, and had more than one outlet as it could go overland into Turkey, or through the Persian Gulf, or on a northern route through Russia. Thus the main European pressures were directed on India as a commercial prize, resulting in its conquest and colonialization by the English toward the end of the eighteenth century, and militarily on the Ottomans, who staved off defeat but ceased to expand and went on to be economically dominated in the nineteenth century, known as "the sick man of Europe." Iran was both too remote geopolitically and too difficult to penetrate economically in the eighteenth century, with the result that social change there was largely internal in dynamic, and this took the form of tribal civil wars as first one tribe and then another sought to control the state from the fall of the Safavids in 1722 until the emergence of the Qajars in 1800. In Wallerstein's world-systemic terms, Iran was part of the external arena of the world-economy

<sup>463</sup> I pursue this argument at some length in an essay, "Modes of Production, European Impact and Social Change in the Pre-Capitalist Middle East and South Asia: A Comparative Survey of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, San Francisco, California (1984).

throughout this period, largely self-sufficient and not an integral part of it, while the Ottomans and Mughals got pulled into the periphery of the world-economy, that is, into increasingly weaker positions vis-a-vis the European core countries. All this would change for Iran in the course of the nineteenth century, during which the country crossed the threshold from external arena to periphery of the European world-economy, and from primarily endogenous patterns of social change to relations of dependence on Great Britain and Russia.

## **Conclusion to Part One**

### **The Significance of the Safavid Period and the Eighteenth Century**

It will be useful to stand back now from the empirical detail of our historical narrative and attempt to draw together the theoretical and sociological threads of the underlying analysis, so that the relationship between the two orders of explanation can be once again made clear. The ground covered so far has focused on three principal moments in the history of social change in Iran from 1500 to 1800.

**The achievements of the Safavid social formation and its particular political economy.** An undisputed economic peak was attained in the seventeenth century under Shah 'Abbas and his immediate successors. In Chapter Two the main social classes and significant groups in Iranian society were introduced, and evidence on their conditions of life and standards of living was presented. An argument was made that the entire social formation was best conceptualized in Marxian terms not as a unitary feudal or Asiatic mode of production but as a hybrid articulation of three modes of production—pastoral nomadism in the tribal sector, a peasant crop-sharing system under several overlords (the state, tiyul holders, vaqf administrators and private owners) in the agrarian sector, and a petty-commodity mode of production organized by both the state and a private sector in the urban economy. The complexity of this social structure meant that Iran possessed several ruling classes in the seventeenth century—tribal chiefs, controllers of land revenue, and merchants and official ulama—over all of whom the Safavid ruling family loomed hegemonic, by virtue of its location at the top of all three modes of production, drawing on the surplus produced in each. The dominance of the Safavid state had other determinants as well: its successful absolutism reposed on multiple legitimations—the pre-Islamic divine right of kings and the prestige accorded the founders of the dynasty as heads of a sufi order, descendants from the Shi'i imams and establishers of Shi'ism as the

new state religion in Iran. All these earned respect and authority for the ruling family among tribespeople, peasantry and town dwellers. The Safavids' 222-year reign was the longest in a millenium in Iran (and the longest since) and this durability constitutes further testimony to the political stability they enjoyed.

In assessing Iran's external relations in the seventeenth century, we found them characterized qualitatively as above all relations of equality vis-a-vis both the rising commercial powers of the West (Holland, England and France) and Iran's neighboring Islamic empires (the Ottomans, Mughals and Uzbeks). In terms of the mix of raw materials and "manufactures," balance of trade and apportionment of profits, we found that there was no possibility of considering Iran dependent on Europe at this early stage in their relations. Rather, in world-systemic terms, Iran was a world-empire in the external arena, or, seen from the Iranian point of view, Europe was part of its own external arena. Both sides were relatively self-sufficient and structurally independent of each other, and thus, when they related, they did so as relative equals. This relationship was yet another factor in the stability of the Iranian political economy and the paramount position of the shahs, who were among the main internal beneficiaries of the world trade.

**Contradictions in the Safavid social formation and the fall of the dynasty in 1722.** For all its longevity and material and cultural accomplishments, this social structure, and its underlying political economy, were anything but static. The existence of several modes of production exacerbated tendencies to conflict, and shaped these in certain directions. As we saw, numerous popular movements of peasants, tribespeople and bazaar classes occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the obstacles to organizing resistance across economic sectors rendered success at the level of national political power or achieving local independence impossible. Rather, inter- and intra-elite struggles proved more salient in the Safavid period. After several tribal civil wars in the sixteenth century, the Safavid state succeeded in imposing its absolutist claim over the unruly tribal elite in the early seventeenth century. Two generations later, an intra-elite conflict within the ruling family involving the harem factions and leading ulama undermined the ability of the shahs to control this fractious system, and 'Abbas's successors were incapable of furthering his policies. At the same

time, signs of fiscal crisis appeared—an unfavorable balance of trade drained specie out of Iran, and prices rose internally, while the state's expenditures on the army, court and harem grew inordinately. Thus external economic relations were a contributing factor to a political and economic deterioration that had largely internal determinants.

The Safavid dynasty lurched into an intertwined economic, political and ideological crisis by the turn of the eighteenth century. Budgetary problems, intra-elite squabbling and a long period of peace with the Ottomans undermined its military capabilities. Persecution of non-Shi'i minorities rent the social fabric, alienating Georgian military commanders and bureaucrats, Armenian merchants, Zoroastrian and Hindu communities, and most fatefully, the Sunni tribal groups on the periphery of the empire in the Caucasus, Baluchistan, Khuzistan and the Afghan provinces. A small army of Afghan tribesmen easily brought down the whole edifice in 1722 when no provincial army rallied to the aid of the Safavids besieged at Isfahan, and high level betrayals and dissension precluded any effective military response from an army that had been neglected for several decades. When the state faltered, the system quickly collapsed. Iran's more powerful and aggressive neighbors, the Ottomans and Russians, promptly made incursions in the west and north, and by 1724 the country was divided at least four ways by the Afghans, Ottomans, Russians and remaining Safavid forces under Tahmasp and his soon-to-be master, Nadir.

The eighteenth-century watershed. The depth of the disastrous circumstances which the Iranian people lived through for the remainder of the eighteenth century—almost eight decades—was recognized as early as the 1780s when an EIC report noted "... the comparison between the past and present state of Persia, in every respect, will be found truly deplorable."<sup>1</sup> A modern historian, Jean Aubin, has characterized the century as "catastrophic ... by far the blackest period in the whole history of Islamic Iran."<sup>2</sup> And our analysis of conditions during the successive reigns of the Afghans, Nadir Shah, Karim Khan Zand and the rise of the Qajars has borne this out in a tale of economic collapse and societal dislocation, of wars, civil and foreign, famine, disease and emigration, adding

<sup>1</sup> *Three Reports*, 86.

<sup>2</sup> Aubin, "La Politique religieuse des safavides," 241.

up to destruction of the economy and depopulation of the country.

The consequences of this experience, in light of the achievements of the Safavid period, went very deep. The reversal of the internal dynamic of economic development in Iran is the most striking. Jahangir Saleh and Alessandro Bausani have suggested that the breakdown entailed the loss of a historic opportunity to develop an indigenous capitalism, whether by state direction from above or by merchant capital in the urban sector.<sup>3</sup> While this may seem a little exaggerated (and I would argue *only* a little), it is intriguing to speculate how an intact Safavid political economy, after another century of stable growth and prosperity, would have fared in the nineteenth century. There can be no doubt that the urban economy's development was set back enormously, and the eighteenth century *did* in effect seal off any incipient evolution toward capitalism, *if* one was in motion at the Safavid zenith in the seventeenth century. In a related development, the state was weakened as the central single economic actor in the social formation—the Afghans, Afshars and Zands lacked the extensive royal domains of the Safavids, did far less building and commercial infrastructural work, controlled the lucrative silk monopoly less determinedly (and more significantly, saw the volume of silk exported plummet quite drastically), and for the most part commanded far less revenues across the board. As we shall see, this weakened the state politically as well. The role of the tribes was likewise definitively circumscribed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—while the prominence of Afghans, Afshars, Zands and finally Qajars in the successive tribal wars would seem to verify Lambton's thesis of a "tribal resurgence," none of these could maintain itself for long except the Qajars. Reid argues that after 'Abbas and into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "the tribes, while still important political, social, economic, and military forces within Iran, never quite found an established position within the official structure of government."<sup>4</sup> Many tribes still managed to thrive in their local areas within the limits of the pastoral nomadic mode of production, but their chiefly leaders, as contenders for hegemony among the several ruling classes of Iran, never recovered the preeminent position they had fought for in the sixteenth century. Finally, peasants undoubtedly

<sup>3</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 152-53; Saleh, "Social Formations in Iran," 107.

<sup>4</sup> Reid, *Tribalism and Society*, 61; see also *idem*, "The Qajar Uymaq in The Safavid Period, 1500-1722," 136-37.

suffered more than tribespeople in the eighteenth century as irrigation systems deteriorated, troop movements bankrupted them, military commanders drafted them and the state squeezed them for taxes.

In conclusion, internally, though each mode of production remained intact from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries, *all* were significantly weakened, as was the state as an economic entity, and the sum of their parts as a social formation was far less by 1800 than it had been under 'Abbas in the 1620s. The eighteenth century was a developmental reversal of huge proportions and its consequences, in terms of an unmeasurable lost opportunity, continued to adversely affect the country into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Externally, the century saw an erosion of the developing contacts with the West of 'Abbas's day, not in the qualitative direction of any tendency toward an incipient dependency but in absolute terms as a lack of any contacts at all by the 1780s and 1790s. As Thomas Ricks has pointed out:

In a real sense, the European remained *outside* the class structure of late-feudal Iran. He was bewildered by the apparent "chaos" of Iranian class struggles and powerless to influence the outcome of the struggle or to incline the contenders in favor of European commercial interests.<sup>5</sup>

If the Europeans were not major actors in the turbulent eighteenth century, they were in a sense yet another missing ingredient in the political economy of the Afghans, Nadir Shah and Karim Khan alike. This too represented a decline in state power vis-a-vis late Safavid times. As the European-centered world system of capitalism emerged along the new maritime routes to India, southeast Asia and the Americas, the loss of Middle Eastern centrality as a link between East and West increasingly made itself felt. While Iran suffered neither the hyper-inflation and military pressure that the Ottomans did nor the growing colonial incursions that the Mughals felt, we have observed that its long stay in the external arena of this world economy meant an inability to emerge definitively as either a powerful core or a dominated periphery. Loss of contact with the West thus contributed to a gradual, relative decline commercially, militarily and politically which would be a heavy legacy for the Qajars in the nineteenth century. Thus, due to isolation from opportunities and stimulus, we have a case of

<sup>5</sup> Ricks, "Politics and Trade," 12.

decline in the world system without dependency or peripheralization, a fairly unique situation in comparative international perspective, perhaps roughly true also of China and Japan.

In the eighteenth century the importance of Iran's relations with its immediate neighbors proved more salient than those with the Europeans. The Ottomans and Russians quickly took advantage of the 1722 collapse to make territorial incursions, but these were repelled in the 1730s by military or diplomatic means. India and Central Asia were invaded by Iran at the end of the decade, and though lucrative, these interventions also were short-lived. After direct commercial contacts with the East India companies waned in the latter half of the century, Iran's major trading partners became India and the Ottomans (though this was to a significant degree a transit trade for Europe), and a growing trade relationship was emerging with Russia to the north, which by 1800 presented a state and political economy more akin to the European than the neighboring world-imperial mold of the now flagging Ottomans and Mughals. The eighteenth century was in world-systemic respects a highly transitional one from earlier relations of equality to subsequent ones of dependence and peripheralization.

In terms of political culture, finally, the century was also a watershed in some crucial ways. The Safavid absolutist project did not die suddenly. It required the ruthlessness of the Afghan occupation, the syncretic religion and military expansionism of Nadir's false starts, and Karim's successorless experiment with just government and moderation at Shiraz before a viable new dynasty superseded Abbas the Great's descendants. Each of the three intervening "dynasties"—Afghans, Afshars and Zands—weakened the Safavid hold on the popular and elite imaginations, but each lacked one or more of the material or ideological resources that had made the Safavids hegemonic. The failure of Karim Khan in particular to perpetuate his reign of efficiency and justice was a historical missed opportunity for Iran, but one which was in a sense inevitable without a wider internal and external base or far-reaching claim to monarchical legitimation. The successive failures to establish firm central control had the cumulative effect of weakening the institution of the monarchy as a whole, and lessening the prospects for any future absolutism as unquestioned as had been the Safavids'.

A parallel development of import was the decoupling of the state-ulama connection that flourished under the Safavids. The Sunni Afghans and Nadir attempted to lodge Shi'ism from its position as state and national religion; Karim restored it only nominally. While Iran retained for the most part a Shi'i religious culture, the ulama lost economic power in the form of state patronage and vast vaqf landholdings and in the course of the century developed a greater reliance on economic, kinship and ideological ties with the urban bazaar classes. As Algar observes, "Religious loyalty was no longer synonymous with loyalty to the monarch, and Shi'ism was established as an autonomous force."<sup>6</sup> This trend was reinforced by the emergence of the mujtahids as a pole of cultural and political influence; the usulis insisted that mujtahids were needed to interpret the faith, that each believer was bound to follow the counsel in religious matters of a living mujtahid. Despite all the political and economic dislocations of the century, Shi'ism proved durable and socially cementing in Iran, but saw a shift in its locus of legitimation away from the monarchy and downward into the popular milieu.

It took the greater part of the eighteenth century to effect the transition from Safavids to Qajars—via Afghan invasion, Nadir's reconquest and Asian campaigns, renewed civil wars, Karim Khan's smaller Iran, another round of civil wars and finally the bloody rise of the new Qajar dynasty. In multiple respects the century provided a disastrous link between the promising political economy of the seventeenth and the social formation of the nineteenth, which would be stable but at a far lower level of development. The suffering of the Iranian people was great in this period, and the shadows it cast would prove to be long. A study of the contours of the resulting system will make clear the terms of the new dispensation, whose limits are best considered against the achievements of an earlier time, now lost to view.

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<sup>6</sup> Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 300. See also Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 215: "... temporal rule was deliberately shorn of all hierocratic trappings."

**Part Two**  
**Social Structure and Social Change**  
**in Qajar Iran, 1800-1925**

## Introduction to Part Two

From 1905 to 1925 Iran was plunged into a whirlwind of social dislocation and change. The years 1905 to 1911 witnessed a tumultuous upheaval known as the Constitutional Revolution, involving mass participation, particularly in the urban sector, directed primarily against the autocratic domination of society by the Qajar state and its helplessness in the face of foreign powers. In 1906 Muzaffar al-Din Shah was forced to grant a constitution; in 1908 his successor Muhammad 'Ali staged a coup against the first parliament (the *majlis*); in 1909 the anti-constitutional shah was compelled to abdicate in favor of his 11-year old son, and the revolution finally ended in late 1911 when Russian troops entered Iran to dissolve the second *majlis* and prop up the shaky Qajar monarchy. World War 1 brought severe economic hardship exacerbated by Turkish and Russian armies fighting on Iranian soil and culminating in a tragic famine in 1918-19 that took an enormous toll in human lives. While the Russian Revolution removed the tsar's strong hand from Iranian affairs after 1918, the British proposed a protectorate-like status for Iran in 1919, and when this proved unpopular and politically unacceptable, backed the coup of a rising military commander named Reza Khan Pahlavi in February 1921 to restore the state's authority. Reza Khan maneuvered steadily into a position of unquestioned power by late 1925 when the *majlis* dissolved the Qajar dynasty, and crowned himself as the founder of a new Pahlavi dynasty in the following year.

This dramatic sequence of events reposed on a prior transition in the Iranian political economy brought about largely by the growing dependence of Iran on the Russian and British governments and economies in the course of the nineteenth century. The alternately defiant and hopeful attitudes of the early Qajar shahs toward the two European powers had been dashed decisively by the turn of the twentieth century, as the Qajar state found itself in growing debt, with little control over its own customs revenues and tariffs, roads, communications, banks or army. Internal economic development had slowly taken place over the hundred year period, as evidenced by the available data on foreign

trade, agricultural production and population growth. But much of its pace and form was likewise determined from abroad, and its benefits were limited to a few groups, notably the court, a new class of landlords, and a section of merchants. The great bulk of peasants, tribespeople, artisans, small traders and urban poor were living through an experience of either stagnation or deterioration in their changing conditions of life, only now, especially in the cities, they were finding articulate voices among the ulama and other educated groups to criticize the political system that subjected them to foreign control.

Chapter Four of this dissertation analyzes these major political, economic and ideological developments in the Iranian social formation by bringing into play the key concept of *dependent development*. We shall thus trace the impact of Iran's insertion into the nineteenth-century world capitalist system as a peripheral area to the European core, exploring the nature and extent of a deepening dependency upon Russia and Great Britain for the principal social classes and significant groups in Iranian society, in empirical detail. And in light of this process, the major movements for social change studied in Chapter Five—reform efforts by the state, urban and tribal rebellions, the Constitutional Revolution and the separatist movements and Pahlavi coup of the post-World War I period—can be seen as complex responses by the groups and classes living through the turmoil of transition to a dependent relationship with outside forces. Taken *together*, the two chapters of Part Two demonstrate the subject-object dialectic discussed in Chapter One, and reveal the interplay of the internal and external logics of social change in a concrete historical setting.

## Chapter Four

### Crossing the Threshold of Dependence:

#### The Iranian Social Formation from 1800 to 1914

... the antagonism existing between Russia and England has become such that should I wish to go out for an excursion or a shooting expedition in the north, east and west of my country, I must consult the English, and should I intend to go south I must consult the Russians.

\* \* \*

Whatever we do in the south to develop our country by the making of roads, &c., the Russians immediately say this is done for the benefit of the English... If we do anything in the north, east or west, the English immediately say this is done to the benefit of the Russians.

—remarks attributed to Nasir al-Din Shah in 1888 by the English chargé d'affaires Wolff.<sup>1</sup>

A central controversy in the economic history of Iran revolves around the nature of the changes that occurred in the nineteenth century: was there an economic "decline" or on the other hand, can one see the "beginnings of modernization" in the long reign of the Qajar dynasty from 1800 to 1925? Did living standards rise or fall? Did the level and type of consumption improve or deteriorate for the majority of the population, and within the subsectors of peasant agriculture, tribal pastoralism and urban production and trade? The travellers who visited Iran in the early nineteenth century noted the devastation we have recorded in Chapter Three; according to Charles Issawi, their accounts "agree in depicting a country suffering from depopulation, poverty, and economic exhaustion, and largely isolated from the mainstream of world politics, trade, science, and culture."<sup>2</sup> In the

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Shaul Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform under the Qajars: 1858-1896* (London: Ithaca Press, 1978), 205, 244 note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 13. See also Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 47.

view of Julian Bharier, "In 1900 Iran was ... a fairly primitive, almost isolated state, barely distinguishable as an economic entity.... There were signs that the economy was developing but at the turn of the century it still remained one of the most backward countries in the world."<sup>3</sup>

"How much" development took place in Qajar Iran, then? In contrast to Bharier and others who are either looking forward into the petroleum-led industrialization of the post-World War I period or are comparing early twentieth-century Iran unfavorably with its Ottoman, Egyptian and British Indian neighbors, I shall be attempting to demonstrate that considerable development took place in the course of the nineteenth century, and that Iran in 1914 was transformed significantly from the situation prevailing in 1800. But in contrast to analyses which optimistically assess the changes as progressive and the seeds of modernization,<sup>4</sup> we shall see that Iran's development was dependent, in that it was shaped from abroad, and severely limited in both form and extent. Thus this chapter introduces the key concept of *dependent development*, as a process of change involving internal and external actors and causes, and political, economic and social effects.

In exploring the nature of dependence in Qajar Iran, this chapter will move from the external political and economic relations of Iran with Britain, Russia and other countries to internal economic developments in Iran's three modes of production. This procedure, the inverse of that followed in Chapters Two and Three, is invoked because now a theory of growing dependence of Iran on the West is operative. This is not to say that all (or perhaps even most) of the internal economy was determined by the external relations, but rather that a critical threshold was crossed in this period such that increasingly large numbers of people were affected to a greater extent than ever before in their daily lives by forces emanating from outside Iran. This process extended to the Qajar state as well, whose institutions and their relations to the West and civil society are examined in a third section. Along the way, data on secular trends in the Qajar political economy assesses such realities as

<sup>3</sup> Julian Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran 1900-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 19-20. Cf. Vincent Sheean's judgment as late as 1926: "In its social and economic structure, there can be little doubt that Persia is one of the most backward countries in the world. Except Tibet, Afghanistan, and Abyssinia, no other organized nation presents quite the same spectacle of medievalism...": *The New Persia* (New York and London: The Century Co., 1927), 231-32.

<sup>4</sup> I feel this is the more or less implicit thrust of three important researchers on Qajar Iran, Gad Gilbar, Guity Nashat and V. F. Nowshirvani, whose specific works will be analyzed (and drawn on) below.

the composition and balance of foreign trade, inflation and wage data, and the fiscal crises faced by the state—all key indicators of the impact and nature of dependent development.

The reader will notice on one hand an inevitable overlap of topics and information at times and on the other, a seemingly artificial separation of things which belong together, both within this chapter and Part Two as a whole. Moreover, though Chapter Four “stops” in 1914 due to the tumultuous changes that were wrought by World War 1 and its aftermath, some economic data of the early 1920s is introduced here to compensate for certain gaps and unevenness in the available data. These appear to me inevitable problems which discursive explanation of a complex, multifaceted phenomenon poses for analysis. It is to be hoped that the overall logic of exposition and utility of our conceptual framework outweigh these disadvantages.

## **I. External Political and Economic Relations**

The epigraphs to Chapter Four reveal the shah’s perception of the degree of control exercised over his country by two European powers in 1888. Anglo-Russian rivalry in Iran, part of their “Great Game” for control of Asia, culminated in their 1907 agreement to peacefully compete in their own zones of “influence” in Iran, separated by a neutral buffer zone open to both. The result of a century of competition was the dependence of Iran on both, politically, militarily, financially and economically. This section will examine the modalities of this process by focussing on the principal activities, events and institutions involved in the relations of Iran, first with imperial England (and its colony in India), then with Tsarist Russia, and finally with all the distant “others,” in particular a rising German power among the Europeans, and Iran’s Middle Eastern neighbors, the Ottomans and Afghans.

### **I.A. Iran’s Relations with England and India**

**From diplomacy to war, 1800-1857.** In the first decade of the nineteenth century the Napoleonic wars involved Iran in European politics as both England and France sought friendly relations while Russia invaded again. The English and the Qajars, to a greater or lesser degree virtually

ignorant of one another,<sup>5</sup> were brought into contact when John Malcolm, a military officer for the East India Company, arrived in Tehran with an imposing suite and rich gifts in November 1800. Treaties of alliance and commerce were concluded on January 28, 1801, which promised mutual aid in the event of an Afghan attack on Iran or India, or the appearance of a French military force in Iran (the British were alarmed by Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in the summer of 1798). The commercial clauses contained no major concessions.<sup>6</sup> After this promising start, however, relations stalled between 1801 and 1807: Iranian embassies to Bombay met with mishaps, English policy was in limbo as governor-generals of India changed, and, most significantly, when Russia occupied the Iranian Caucasus in 1804 no English aid was forthcoming due to England's alliance with Russia against France. Fath 'Ali Shah (who ruled Iran from 1797 to 1834) then turned to the French for help, concluding a treaty with them in 1807 that stipulated he break relations with England and provide logistical support for Napoleon's projected invasion of India.<sup>7</sup> When France soon after made its own alliance with Russia the shah readmitted the English, who sent conflicting embassies from the king under Harford Jones in 1809 and from the EIC under Malcolm in 1810, prompting Mirza Buzurg, chief minister of 'Abbas Mirza, the shah's heir apparent and foreign minister, to rebuke Jones with the comment, "It was extremely weak of us to withdraw from every other alliance for the sake of allying ourselves to a power that seems to have no regular manner of conducting its affairs."<sup>8</sup> Jones nevertheless concluded a "Preliminary Treat of Subsidy and Alliance," which advanced a certain sum to the shah to continue his fight against England's rival Russia, while Iran dispatched in 1809 its first ambassador to London since 1626.<sup>9</sup>

From 1810 to 1813 Britain enjoyed much influence with the shah, who called its ambassador Gore Ouseley his "Minister for Foreign Affairs," but when the Franco-Russian alliance collapsed,

<sup>5</sup> On their mutual lack of knowledge of each other see Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 229.

<sup>6</sup> R. M. Savory, "British and French Diplomacy in Persia, 1800-1810," pp. 31-44 in *Iran* (Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies), volume X (1972), 35-36; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 68-70.

<sup>7</sup> Savory, "British and French Diplomacy in Persia," 36; Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 49.

<sup>8</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 238. On the Jones-Malcolm struggle for precedence and the comedy of errors of their embassies, see Savory, "British and French Diplomacy in Persia," 36-43.

<sup>9</sup> Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 51; Denis Wright, *The Persians Amongst the English. Episodes in Anglo-Persian History* (London: I. B. Taurus & Co. Ltd., 1985), xv.

England became less inclined to pay its subsidy to Iran and favored peace between Russia and Iran, which was duly agreed to in 1813-14.<sup>10</sup> In late 1814 England and Iran signed a "(Definitive) Treaty of Defensive Alliance," providing for mutual assistance; specifically, if the Afghans invaded India, Iran would mobilize its army against them, while should any European nation invade Iran, Britain would either send arms and troops, or pay an annual subsidy of 200,000 tumans (150,000 pounds sterling) as long as hostilities lasted.<sup>11</sup> When war did break out between Russia and Iran again from 1826 to 1828 Britain failed to come to the shah's aid, alleging (falsely) that Iran had been the aggressor; the financial subsidy clause was annulled in 1828 for a lump payment of 200,000 tumans.<sup>12</sup> A growing consensus emerged in England by the early 1830s however that Russia posed a threat of further expansion in Asia at the expense of Iran, the Ottoman Empire, and Central Asia. Thus was born the outlines of what came to be known as the "Great Game" or the "Eastern Question," in which Iran assumed increasing importance as a buffer against Russian advances toward India.<sup>13</sup>

The official Iranian perspective found expression in 1837 when Husayn Khan, sent to Britain to honor the accession of Queen Victoria, described the attitudes of Muhammad Shah (ruled 1834-48) toward England and Russia:

The shah is sovereign of his country, and as such he desires to be independent. There are two great powers with whom Persia is in more or less direct contact—Russia and the English power in India. The first has more military means than the second: on the other hand, England has more money than Russia. The two powers can thus do Persia good and evil; in order above all to avoid the evil, the shah is desirous of keeping himself, with respect to them, within the relations of good friendship and free from all contestation. If, on the contrary, he finds himself threatened on one side, he will betake himself to the other in search of the support which he shall stand in need of. That is not what he desires, but to what he may be driven, for he is not more the friend of one than of the other of those powers: he desires to be with them on a footing of equal friendship. What he cherishes above all is his independence, and the maintenance of good relations with foreign powers.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 240; Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 51.

<sup>11</sup> Treaty in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 86-88.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 86; Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 444-45.

<sup>13</sup> David Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia 1828-1914. A Study in British and Russian Imperialism* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1977), 36-38 and *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> Ann Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," pp. 123-139 in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, volume XLVIII, part II (April 1961), 124, citing G. H. Hunt, *Outram and Havelock's Persian Campaign* (London, 1858), 127.

Underlying this optimistic stance was apprehension of renewed Russian military pressure and skepticism concerning English determination to aid Iran.<sup>15</sup> The next act came in the form of direct military confrontation with *England* when Iran attempted to restore the Afghan city of Harat to its dominions in 1837. Indicative of their influence and stake in Iran, the British and Russian ambassadors were in the shah's camp at the siege. When the Englishman McNeil advised a negotiated settlement and redress of various British grievances in Iran, he was rebuffed and stalked out of the camp in June 1838. The English then occupied Kharg Island in the Persian Gulf and demanded that the siege of Harat be lifted. The shah acquiesced in September 1838, but the British remained at Kharg and the Iranians 40 miles from Harat until 1841-42.<sup>16</sup>

A lull ensued in British-Russian hostility from 1841 to 1851, but Afghanistan led to a new British conflict with Iran, now under Nasir al-Din Shah (who ruled from 1848 to 1896). The khan of Harat asked for Iranian protection against his rivals at Qandahar and Kabul in 1851, prompting dispatch of Iranian forces whose withdrawal was negotiated with the British in 1853. In 1856 the leaders of a local coup at Harat once again requested Iranian help, and the army set out in February. But by May the coup had been reversed, and now Iran was coming to conquer. The British decided to back the aspirations of Dust Muhammad, the khan of Kabul and Qandahar, perceiving a united Afghanistan, in Palmerston's words, as "the true Bulwark of British India" and Iran as "the advanced guard of Russia." British forces sailed to the Gulf, and a state of war existed from November 1856 to March 1857, during which Kharg Island and the port of Bushire were occupied, as was Muhammareh on the Karun river route to Isfahan. This war was unpopular in Iran, where widespread urban disturbances occurred, and was resolved by a peace treaty which forced Iran to renounce all claims to Harat and Afghanistan, and to definitively grant Britain "most favored nation" status in commercial matters.<sup>17</sup> The use of military power to achieve diplomatic and strategic advantage thus confirmed the commercial preeminence of Great Britain in Iran by mid-century,

<sup>15</sup> Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 46.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-53.

<sup>17</sup> See Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 141-43 and 161-63 for the 1853 and 1857 treaties, and Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 97-98, and Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 454-55, for the war.

a parallel process to which we now turn.

**Trade, 1800-1850s.** British efforts to secure a far-reaching commercial treaty lasted from 1800 to 1841 and were met by considerable Iranian resistance, based on the perceived need for protection of the national economy. The Iranian ministers told Ellis in the 1836 treaty negotiations that "as the balance of the money trade was against Persia, any measure that encouraged the extension of the trade with manufacturing nations would be injurious; the only exception admitted was the import of arms and military stores." While Ellis called this "dogma," the ministers opposed increased trade due to "the scarcity of coin in Persia; the want of mines of the precious metals; the impossibility of making returns in produce, and the discouragement of domestic, from the influx of foreign, manufactures."<sup>18</sup> Only four years later, however, one detects a resignedness on the part of the prime minister and the shah in the face of English commerce (and the military force deployed in the Gulf):

The former is said to have remarked he had once wished to see a stop put to European trade and people were told not to purchase European goods but that they did so secretly notwithstanding. The Shah is reported to have said that he had in vain endeavoured to encourage Manufactures in this Country and that now he must be content with the increased Duties which the European Trade brought to the State however much the Country suffered by the Trade.<sup>19</sup>

In May 1836 the shah issued a farman, which though not a treaty, gave the British the same five per-cent customs on imports and exports as the Russians enjoyed, with exemptions from all internal road tolls and promises of security for merchants. The long-awaited treaty of commerce was signed on October 28, 1841; it accorded merchants of both countries "most favored nation" status and allowed British commercial agents to reside in Tehran, Tabriz and Bushire, and Iranian representatives to be established in London and Bombay.<sup>20</sup>

Actual British trade saw a sharp rise in the first half of the nineteenth century, both in the Persian Gulf and along new routes to the more populous northern markets. From its low point in the

<sup>18</sup> "Treaty Negotiations, 1836," Ellis to Palmerston, January 16, 1836 and September 1, 1836, pp. 78-80 in Issawi, *EHI*, 78. For further evidence of such "economic nationalism" see the attitudes of Muhammad Shah's first minister, Qa'im Maqam, expressed on February 25, 1835, in Ann K. S. Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," pp. 215-244 in D. S. Richards, editor, *Islam and the Trade of Asia*, 231.

<sup>19</sup> "Abbot to Aberdeen," September 30, 1840, pp. 111-112 in Issawi, *EHI*, 112.

<sup>20</sup> Text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 123-124. See also Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 233-34.

late eighteenth century (which we saw reached in Chapter Three), the EIC revived its trade between India and Iran after 1800. While the EIC provided only 13 percent of India's imports to Iran in 1801,<sup>21</sup> both volume and market share increased steadily thereafter. In 1809 the EIC carried about 20,000 pounds sterling worth of goods to Bushire; by 1823 British ships accounted for 233,685 pounds sterling in imports to Bushire, about one-third of the port's trade.<sup>22</sup> Most significantly, as the EIC began to undermine the Indian textile sector, it naturally replaced Indian piece goods with its own in the country trade with Iran.<sup>23</sup> British imports to Iran consisted of cotton textiles, metals, sugar and spices, and in return India received wheat, tobacco, silk, wool, dried fruits, precious stones, carpets, dyes and drugs. The balance was heavily against Iran, which exported some 640,000 pounds sterling in specie per year to India between 1810 and 1827.<sup>24</sup> By 1850, Bushire's imports from what was now British India rose to an estimated 500,000 pounds sterling and Bandar'Abbas's were 300,000, while exports from these two main ports of Iran totaled 437,000 pounds sterling.<sup>25</sup>

A new route opened up in the 1830s from Europe to Iran across the Black Sea from Istanbul to the Ottoman port of Trabzon, and then overland to Tabriz, which became Iran's largest emporium. Inaugurated by crown prince 'Abbas Mirza in 1830 to strengthen the trade of Tabriz and Azerbaijan, by 1836 up to seven-eighths of British exports sent from England to Iran were utilizing this circuit.<sup>26</sup> In 1848 Britain supplied 772,000 of Tabriz's 831,000 pounds sterling worth of total imports (92.9 percent), of which the bulk were printed cottons and bleached calicoes.<sup>27</sup> The trade was handled in Tabriz by Iranian merchants and (after 1836) by foreigners under Russian protection, and in Tehran

<sup>21</sup> The EIC accounted for 4 out of India's 30 lakhs of rupees in trade with Iran, according to Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 263-64.

<sup>22</sup> 1809 calculations mine, based on a trade of 600 bales of cotton: Roger T. Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade and the Agricultural Economy of Southern Iran in the Nineteenth Century," pp. 173-189 in Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, *Modern Iran. The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 180. The 1823 figure is in "Persian Gulf Trade," Willock to Canning, July 7, 1824, pp. 89-91 in Issawi, *EHI*, 90.

<sup>23</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 180.

<sup>24</sup> Ahmad Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture: Production and Trade of Opium in Persia, 1850-1906," pp. 233-250 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 16, number 2 (May 1984), 235. For the items in this trade, see Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 263-64, and Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 223.

<sup>25</sup> Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 239-40.

<sup>26</sup> Guity Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market: Foreign Trade and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Iran," pp. 53-85 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XIV, numbers 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1981), 59.

<sup>27</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 108.

by Iranians for the most part, and by several Indians and a Maltese under British protection; in 1848 there were still no British merchants permanently established in Tehran.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, in Iran's total trade, Britain accounted for up to or over 50 percent of the exports and even more of the imports, by the 1850s.<sup>29</sup> It had the lion's share of the textile trade, which may have constituted 90 percent of Iranian imports in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>30</sup> As Abbott reported on the situation in 1845:

Our manufactures appear to have found their way into the remotest parts of the country and they are continually superceding those of Persia. Their present very low prices owing partly to the influx of too great a quantity of goods this year will probably lead to their becoming still better known and there is yet abundant scope for increased consumption, for at present our manufactures are little used by, and indeed little known to, a great number of the rude Tribes in this Country.<sup>31</sup>

Though rather naive and optimistic on this last point, it is certainly true that by the 1850s Britain was well-entrenched as Iran's leading trade partner, with excellent prospects of remaining so for the rest of the century.

**Concessions, trade and political influence, 1850s-1914.** The half-century from 1863 to 1914 witnessed a succession of "concessions" to exploit or monopolize raw materials or infrastructural development in Iran, granted to both English and Russian subjects and their governments.<sup>32</sup> Lambton suggests the shah's reasoning for this by the mid-1870s:

Nāṣir ud-Dīn, realizing that Persia could not transform herself without foreign help and that, in any case, foreign intervention could not be prevented, conceived, therefore, a policy of inducing foreign powers to invest in Persia in the hope that they would contribute to the development and prosperity of Persia because they had a stake in the well-being of the country themselves.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Abbott to Palmerston, August 2, 1848, cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 117-18; L. Berezin, *Puteshestvie po Severnoi Persii* (Kazan, 1852), extracts translated pp. 105-108 in Issawi, *EHI*, 105.

<sup>29</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 71-72; Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," pp. 229-241 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XVI, numbers 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1983), 235.

<sup>30</sup> According to the Soviet scholar M.S. Ivanov, cited by Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 60.

<sup>31</sup> Cited by Abbas Amanat, editor and introduction, *Cities & Trade: Consul Abbott on the Economy and Society of Iran 1847-1866*, Oxford Oriental Monographs No. 5 (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), "Introduction," xv-xvi.

<sup>32</sup> For a list of some 21 major concessions to Britain or its subjects see Wilhelm Litten, *Persien von der 'pénétration pacifique' zum Protektorat. Urkunden und Tatsachen zur Geschichte der europäischen 'pénétration pacifique' in Persien 1860-1919* (Berlin, 1920), extracts translated pp. 358-361 in Issawi, *EHI*.

<sup>33</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājār," 125.

The first of these projects was for telegraphic communications between Europe and India. In a series of agreements (1862-63, 1865, 1868, 1872) Iran agreed to the construction of lines across its territory, which it would in part operate and profit from. While the shah could keep a closer eye on his provinces, England would have better contact with its colony in India, a matter of great concern since the 1857-58 revolt there. By 1886 there were 3,966 miles of wire, 1,150 worked by the British and 2,816 by the Iranian government; by 1913 there were 6,000 miles of line.<sup>34</sup>

In 1872 the shah entered into an agreement with Baron Paul Julius de Reuter for a 70-year concession to lay railroads, install telegraph lines, regulate river navigation, exploit mines and state forests and construct irrigation works, with first option on future concessions to open a bank, build streets and roads, mills and factories—all this in return for a 40,000 pound sterling deposit to the shah.<sup>35</sup> The British viceroy to India, Lord Curzon, called the Reuter concession "the most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamed of, much less accomplished, in history."<sup>36</sup> Both the Russians and many Iranians opposed the concession, while the British government was lukewarm in its support, and it was cancelled by the shah in 1873, ostensibly owing to Reuter's failure to fulfill certain conditions regarding the laying of railway tracks within a given period.<sup>37</sup> In 1889, in compensation, Reuter was authorized to establish the Bank of Reuter (later the British-owned Imperial Bank of Persia), and a mining corporation, which prospected unsuccessfully for oil in the 1890s. The bank had a monopoly on the issue of bank notes, whose issue rose from 29,000 tumans in 1890 to 254,000 in 1895 and 1,058,000 by 1900.<sup>38</sup> It cut significantly into the local money-lending markets, and made loans of 500,000 pounds to the government in 1892, 200,000 in 1903 and 100,000 in 1904.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 153-54; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 169-72, for the 1865 convention and its background.

<sup>35</sup> Ram Nandan Kumar, "Economic Background of British Diplomacy in Persia, 1858-1907," pp. 229-236 in *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad), volume L, number 4 (October 1976), 231; Chris Paine, "Iranian Nationalism and the Great Powers: 1872-1954," pp. 3-28 in *MERIP (Middle East Research and Information Project) Reports*, number 37 (1975), 4.

<sup>36</sup> Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 480.

<sup>37</sup> L. E. Frechtling, "The Reuter Concession in Persia," pp. 518-533 in *Asiatic Review* (1938), extracts printed pp. 178-184 in Issawi, *EHI*. See also Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran. The Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892* (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1966), 5-7, 30 note 5.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," pp. 265-291 in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, volume LXIV (June 1901), 279.

<sup>39</sup> Kumar, "Economic Background of British Diplomacy," 233; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle*

Two final concessions of note were for the exploitation of tobacco and oil. In March 1890 the shah decreed that "The monopoly of buying, selling, and manufacturing all the tootoon [pipe tobacco] and tobacco in the interior or exterior of the Kingdom of Persia is granted to Major Talbot by us for fifty years," in return for a payment of 15,000 pounds sterling a year and one-fourth of the profits.<sup>40</sup> The social movement against this concession, led by the merchants affected and the ulama, and supported by the Russians, was of national scope, and its shape and significance will be assessed in Chapter Five. In early 1892 the shah was forced to back down and cancel the concession, indemnifying the English company with 500,000 pounds sterling which he had to borrow from the English Imperial Bank. A less controversial but equally fateful concession was the "special and exclusive privilege" granted to William Knox D'Arcy in May 1901 "to search for, obtain, exploit, develop, render suitable for trade, carry away and sell natural gas petroleum, asphalt and ozokerite throughout the whole extent of the Persian Empire for a term of sixty years." The Iranian state was to receive in return a one-time payment of 20,000 pounds sterling in cash and an equal amount in shares in the company, plus 16 percent of the annual net profits.<sup>41</sup> Oil was discovered on May 26, 1908 in the southwest and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC), under complete British ownership, was created, employing 7-8,000 workers by 1914. Between 1909 and 1913 the British navy started to convert from coal- to oil-burning ships, which prompted the Admiralty under Winston Churchill to acquire controlling financial interest in the APOC in May 1914 by buying 2,001,000 pounds sterling out of 4,000,000 in shares, making Iran's 20,000 pound interest a very small one indeed. In 1923, Churchill claimed that the investment had earned his government 40 million pounds sterling, while Iran's share of the revenues had come to 2 million pounds.<sup>42</sup>

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*East*, I, 205.

<sup>40</sup> "Concession of the Tobacco *régie* in Persia," March 8, 1890, pp. 205-206 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 205.

<sup>41</sup> "William Knox D'Arcy Oil Concession in Persia," May 29, 1901, pp. 249-251 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I.

<sup>42</sup> Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 9; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 272, 278-79; Issawi, *EHI*, 261. A major recent work on all aspects of the APOC is R. W. Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, volume I, *The Developing Years 1901-1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

In addition to the profits generated by these concessions, British trade with Iran continued to increase in the period up to World War 1, in absolute (though not relative) terms. From 1850 to 1870 Britain accounted for 40 percent of the whole world's trade.<sup>43</sup> In Iran, as we have seen, its share was even higher. After 1870, while some routes declined, others picked up trade. Trade from Trabzon to Iran is said to have fallen from 2,400,000 pounds sterling a year ca. 1875 to just over 1,000,000 by 1883-85. Overall, the Tabriz-Trabzon route fell from carrying two-fifths of Iran's total trade in the 1850s and 1860s to one-tenth by 1900 and less by 1914.<sup>44</sup> A growing share of the import trade to the north and northeast was now supplied by Russia, which emerged as Britain's equal in Iran by the late nineteenth century, and surpassed it from 1900 to 1914. British attention shifted to the Gulf ports and routes leading into the interior from there, given a great impetus by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the growth of steamer traffic in the 1860s and 1870s, and the opening of navigation on the Karun river inland from the Gulf in 1888. The Suez Canal cut the sea route from western Europe to Iran from 18,000 to 10,000 kilometers, and its impact was soon felt at Bushire, where imports rose from 3,466,503 rupees in 1875 to 7,395,000 only three years later.<sup>45</sup> Though the East India Company closed down in 1858, its political and economic functions were assumed by the British government and new companies. As India became economically more integrated to the needs of England's domestic economy for agricultural products, Iran began to fill some of India's needs, with wheat, barley, dried fruits, cotton and opium.<sup>46</sup> Major British and Indian exports to Iran included cotton textiles, tea, indigo, copper, drugs and spices.<sup>47</sup> The value of these exports to Iran rose from about 1,500,000 pounds sterling in 1874/75 to 2,300,000 by 1913/14, while Iran's own exports through the Gulf ports came to only 1,200,000 pounds sterling in the latter year.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 72.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade, 1830-1900: Rise and Decline of a Route," pp. 18-27 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 1, number 1 (January 1970), 24, 25-27.

<sup>45</sup> Gad G. Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," pp. 177-211 in *Die Welt des Islams*, volume XIX, numbers 1-4 (1979), 207; Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 235-36; Issawi, *EHI*, 156-57; Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 184.

<sup>46</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 184-85. On shipments of raw cotton to Bombay in the 1860s, see Issawi, *EHI*, 245. On opium see Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 185-86, and Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xvii-xviii. Iran's agricultural exports will be discussed in more detail below in section II.

<sup>47</sup> A detailed list for the trade with Mashhad in 1898-1900 is given in Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 282.

Total trade in the Gulf rose five- or sixfold from 1817 to 1914.<sup>49</sup>

The number of British firms active in Iran likewise steadily increased. While the French consul claimed there were no English merchants in Iran in 1869, by 1873 there were three British firms in Tabriz though their employees were "for the most part Greeks or Germans."<sup>50</sup> Curzon reported several large British trading companies in the south in 1892, judging that "A good deal of trade is done by native merchants; but the bulk of mercantile transactions passes through the hands of what may indisputably be described as English firms..."<sup>51</sup> In 1914 Wilhelm Litten found 14 large British firms in Iran, by which time there were several hundred English residents in the country.<sup>52</sup> One of the earliest of these was the Greek firm of Ralli Brothers, originally established at Tabriz under Russian protection in 1837. In 1860 the company received British protection, and its owner later became a British subject; the firm secured a dominant position in the import and distribution of silkworm eggs in the late 1860s but withdrew from business in Iran in 1871.<sup>53</sup> Another area where the English concentrated was in the profitable business of carpet manufacturing and exporting. Here the Anglo-Swiss Ziegler and Company and the Persian Carpet Manufacturing Company were active at Sultanabad (Arak), and in 1906 the Oriental Carpet Manufacturing Company was organized in London out of six smaller companies doing business in Turkey. By 1900 Ziegler and Company controlled some 2,500 out of 2,700 looms in Sultanabad and the surrounding villages.<sup>54</sup>

By the early twentieth century, British economic power in Iran was substantial, if no longer dominant vis-a-vis Russia. Total British trade with Iran climbed from 1.7 million pounds sterling in 1875 to 3 million in 1895 and 4.5 million by 1914.<sup>55</sup> The balance was in England's favor by as

<sup>48</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 84. Figures of 3-4 million pounds sterling in piece goods in 1882-84 given here seem very high.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>50</sup> "Dispatches to Minister of Foreign Affairs" (Paris), February 10, 1869, October 30, 1869, and February 10, 1870, from Tehran and Tabriz: pp. 147-148 in Issawi, *EHI*, 148; "Trade of Tabriz, 1837-71," report by Consul-General Jones: pp. 112-116 in *ibid.*, 113.

<sup>51</sup> Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, 42, 573.

<sup>52</sup> Litten, *Persien*, cited by Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 238; Issawi, *EHI*, 23.

<sup>53</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 104; Berezin, *Puteshestvie...*, in Issawi, *IEHI*, 107; Ahmad Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade in Iran in the Nineteenth Century," pp. 51-71 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XVI, numbers 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1983), 53.

<sup>54</sup> Ahmad Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi-yi Rushd-i Sarmayehdari dar Iran: Daureh-i Qajariyyeh* [Historical Obstacles to the Development of Capitalism in the Qajar Era] (Tehran: Payam Press, 1359/1980), 55; Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 287.

<sup>55</sup> A. Ashraf and H. Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans and the Developmental Processes of Nineteenth-Century Iran," pp. 725-750 in A. L. Udovitch, editor, *The Islamic Middle East, 700-1900: Studies in Economic and Social*

much as 20 percent.<sup>56</sup> Due to Russia's rapid rise in the overall trade of Iran, this absolute increase for British trade still entailed a decline in its share, down from the 50 percent or more of the 1850s to 33 percent in 1903 and 20 percent by 1914, about one-half of which was with British India.<sup>57</sup> The British empire's share of the export trade to Iran was higher, at about 25 percent. Litten's rough estimate of British capital investment in Iran from 1860 to 1913 totals almost 10 million pounds sterling, of which the single largest items were the Persian Railways Syndicate (3,000,000, on paper?), the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (2,747,905), the combined loans of 1904-1912 (1,704, 281) and the Imperial Bank of Persia (1,000,000), followed by shipping lines and trading firms (500,000), carpet companies (400,000) and telegraphs (325,000).<sup>58</sup>

Along with these economic bonds came influence within certain sectors of Iranian society. In the south, the British offered gifts and arms to the tribes who would support their aims, especially the Bakhtiari and some of the coastal Arabs. A key area of concern was security on the roads; they also intervened on one side or the other in local tribal disputes.<sup>59</sup> They were also able to influence the appointment of provincial governors in the south by extending or refusing loans from the Imperial Bank of Persia to place their own candidates in a position to "purchase" their offices.<sup>60</sup> These connections entailed some measure of influence at the court itself, although this varied in inverse proportion to the current state of Russian influence in Iran. Finally, through its role in the import of manufactures and export of Iran's agricultural products, Britain developed ties with landowners, merchants, and accordingly, either directly or indirectly, a section of the ulama.<sup>61</sup> The obverse of this influence among certain privileged sectors was a rise of animosity within those classes which least benefited from these ties, which will become more evident in section II below

*History* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1981), 734.

<sup>56</sup> See Ahmad Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles to the Development of a Bourgeoisie in Iran," pp. 308-324 in M.A. Cook, editor, *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: from the rise of Islam to the present day* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 325, for 1907 trade figures, showing such a balance.

<sup>57</sup> H. W. MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects of British Trade in Persia," pp. 136-142 in Issawi, *EHI*, 137, for 1903, and Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 235-36, for 1914.

<sup>58</sup> Litten, *Persien*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 359.

<sup>59</sup> Mehrain, "Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States in Periphery Formations," 119-20; Ahmad Ashraf, "Iran: Imperialism, Class and Modernization from Above," Ph.D. dissertation, Faculty of Political and Social Science, New School for Social Research (1971), 31.

<sup>60</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 120.

<sup>61</sup> Ashraf, "Iran: Imperialism, Class and Modernization from Above," 31.

and the social movements of Chapter Five.

In assessing British policy toward Iran, most commentators view it as dictated by two inter-related security concerns—the defense of India and containment of Russian expansion in Asia. Lord Salisbury said as much in 1889: “Were it not for our possessing India ... we should trouble ourselves but little about Persia.”<sup>62</sup> From the early 1800s to the early 1900s British officials stated incessantly that the best way to meet their security aims was to preserve “the independence and integrity” of Iran.<sup>63</sup> Yet in 1888 when the shah sought firm British guarantees to defend Iran in case of a military invasion from Russia, the British were prepared only to admit that Iran was “a material part” of England’s policy and provided a written promise only that “earnest representations would be made in St Petersburg if Russia infringed Persia’s sovereign rights.”<sup>64</sup> The *realpolitik* behind the rivals’ avowals of an independent Iran in the 1890s is noted by Robert McDaniel: “The Russians wanted to keep Persia independent but under Russian influence, while the British worked to keep Persia independent but free of Russian influence.”<sup>65</sup> Sir Edward Grey hinted at the limited place in British thinking for the concerns of Iranians themselves when he spoke in one breath of his country’s object “to keep Persia as a buffer State and to maintain it as an independent country.”<sup>66</sup> The essentially conservative thrust of this policy was made explicit by the Committee of Imperial Defense in March 1905: “It should be our object, on commercial as well as strategic grounds to maintain the *status quo* in Persia.”<sup>67</sup>

Bound up with these attitudes was a concern for the economic balance of power in Iran between Great Britain and Russia. As Grey said in a House of Commons debate in 1914:

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, I, 22.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Wellington in 1826 and Sir Arthur Hardinge in 1905, cited by Lambton, “Persia: The Breakdown of Society,” 441, and Lansdowne in 1902, quoted by Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, I, 44.

<sup>64</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 209 (see also Malkam Khan’s proposal for a virtual English protectorate over Iran, which to England’s credit, was ignored: *ibid.*, 226-27); Lambton, “Persia: The Breakdown of Society,” 458-59.

<sup>65</sup> Robert A. McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission and the Persian Constitutional Revolution* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1974), 7.

<sup>66</sup> Grey’s remarks are summarized by D. C. M. Platt, *Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 224.

<sup>67</sup> Cited by Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, I, 41-42.

We have to see that affairs do not get so bad that British trade is entirely excluded from the south of Persia and is replaced by Russian trade coming in from the north. That I regard as our major interest and obligation in the matter.<sup>68</sup>

Thus to fully assess the British position in Iran it is necessary to examine the position of her main nineteenth-century competitor, Tsarist Russia, which by 1914 had become the dominant foreign power in Iran.

### **I.B. Iran's Relations with Tsarist Russia**

**From war to diplomacy, 1800-1850.** Russia fought two major wars with Iran between 1801 and 1828. The first was over the province of Georgia whose Christian ruler had signed a treaty of friendship with Catherine the Great in 1783. Aqa Muhammad Qajar invaded Georgia in the 1790s on a brutal campaign, and Emperor Paul of Russia finally declared it part of his empire in 1801.<sup>69</sup> Hostilities were intermittent in the Caucasus after 1805, and resumed in earnest in 1811. In February 1812 the Iranian army defeated the Russians in Qarabagh, but Russian reinforcements crossed the Aras river and won a victory at Aslanduz on October 31-November 1, 1812.<sup>70</sup> Fighting continued for another year until the Treaty of Gulistan was signed in the fall of 1813. This treaty forced Iran to cede Georgia and other territories (including Baku) in Caucasus, gave Russia the right to use Iran's Caspian ports for its commercial shipping and the sole right to have warships on the Caspian, provided for an exchange of ambassadors and commercial agents, and set Russian-Iranian duties on imports and exports at five percent—all significant concessions won by the force of Russian arms.<sup>71</sup> Russia thus emerged from the maneuvering of the Napoleonic wars as the major victor in Iran, where it had won much territory with its attendant population, production and revenue base, as well as the best commercial treaty of the early nineteenth century.

A second major war was touched off when the Russian governor-general of Georgia occupied the disputed district of Gokcheh in 1825. War resumed on August 2, 1826; a holy war was declared

<sup>68</sup> Grey is cited by Kumar (whose italics I have removed), "Economic Background of British Diplomacy," 236.

<sup>69</sup> Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 47.

<sup>70</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 443.

<sup>71</sup> "Treaty of Peace (Gulistan): Russia and Persia," September 30/October 12, 1813 (ratifications exchanged September 3/15, 1814), pp. 84-86 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I.

on the Iranian side. At first Iran regained most of its lost territories, but Fath 'Ali Shah failed to fully support his son 'Abbas Mirza, the military commander. The Russians advanced in the spring of 1827, and by October they had retaken Erivan and Tabriz had fallen because its inhabitants hated the garrison from Mazandaran and opened the city gates to the Russian army. When the shah, urged on by the Ottomans, thought of continuing to resist through the long northern winter the Russians began an advance on Tehran with snowplows, which quickly led to the Treaty of Turkmanchay in February 1828.<sup>72</sup> The provisions for peace required the cession of Iran's Armenian areas of Erivan and Nakhichevan to Russia, a war indemnity of 20,000,000 silver rubles (five million tumans, or the equivalent of about three million pounds sterling), recognized 'Abbas Mirza as the crown prince, and confirmed the earlier rights to navigation on the Caspian and commercial representation in Iran. The main articles of the commercial treaty reaffirmed the Russian right to trade freely throughout Iran, that Iranians would enjoy most favored nation status in Russia, and fixed the import/export duties at five percent.<sup>73</sup> Iran was now further reduced in territory west of the Caspian (to its present-day borders—see Map 4.1 in Appendix II) and was heavily indebted to Russia. In the immediate aftermath of this war the Iranian state was further weakened. The imposition of heavy new taxes provoked revolts in Yazd, Kirman and Khurasan in 1829-30, which were crushed by 'Abbas Mirza only in 1831-33.<sup>74</sup> Equally damaging was the murder of the Russian envoy Griboyedov in 1829 (which will be described in Chapter Five). The Russian government responded mildly to the incident, but the shah's legitimacy was eroded internally, and Russian influence at the Qajar court increased.<sup>75</sup>

The Iranian state was more aggressive in resisting the establishment of Russian consuls in Iran in the 1820s and 1830s, just as it balked at the signing of a commercial treaty with Britain in this period. Russian efforts to place a consul in Rasht and establish themselves near Astarabad were rebuffed from 1822 to 1826.<sup>76</sup> In 1834 the Russians were allowed an official at Rasht for three

<sup>72</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 444-45; Ervand Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism: The Case of Qajar Iran," pp. 3-31 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 5, number 1 (1974), 21; Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 54; Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 22-23.

<sup>73</sup> "Treaties of Peace and Commerce (Turkmanchay): Persia and Russia," February 10/22, 1828, pp. 96-102 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 446; Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 54-55.

<sup>75</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 251.

<sup>76</sup> Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qajars," 226-27.

months a year. The attitude of Muhammad Shah's prime minister Qa'im Maqam, however, in 1835 was that

... if both Russian and English consuls were placed in any one part of Persia, that those functionaries would quickly absorb all the power and authority of the Persian government into their hands, and that that portion of his country would be lost to his government, and in this way would commence a system of seizing piecemeal on his weak, and divided and poor country, which would end in its being entirely partitioned between two powerful lions that had fastened upon its members.<sup>77</sup>

This resistance to Russian commercial penetration continued into the 1840s, though with diminishing success. In 1841-42 Iran complained about Russian trade with "Iran's" unruly Turkoman subjects east of the Caspian, and its fisheries at the mouth of the Atrek river. In 1841 the state made an effort to ban tea consumption in Tehran and Tabriz, ostensibly because of poisoned Chinese tea, but in reality (according to British diplomats) because Russians controlled the trade to the detriment of Iranian merchants. The ban failed within six months. A Russian trading factory was denied in 1842 at Astarabad, but threats made in 1845 and 1846 obtained it. In the same period the Caspian coastal island of Ashuradeh was forcibly occupied for use as a naval base.<sup>78</sup> The net effect of these actions, from the major wars to the persistent attempts to enforce the terms of their treaties, was the reluctant acknowledgment of Russia's superior military force to Iran's northeast and northwest in the first half of the nineteenth century. With this military power came political influence and commercial gains.

**Trade, 1800-1850s.** Despite the warfare of the 1801-1828 period, trade was not greatly affected, judging from the available data, and given the territorial and customs gains by Russia, it increased significantly after 1828. In 1844 the British consul Abbott claimed there was "not a single Russian Mercantile Establishment on the Persian Coast of the Caspian, nor indeed in any town in Persia," the trade being in the hands of Iranian, Georgian and Armenian small merchants.<sup>79</sup> Not only did he overlook the probable Russian citizenship of the Georgians and many Armenians, there were also merchants of other nationalities trading under Russian consular protection, such as the firm of Ralli Brothers, established on that basis at Tabriz in 1837, until its switch to British protection in

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 232.

<sup>78</sup> For this sequence of events, see *ibid.*, 242; Issawi, *EHI*, 76; and Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, x.

<sup>79</sup> Abbott, cited in Issawi, *EHI*, 104.

1860. The turning point in the direct foreign presence in the trade of northern Iran seems to have come in 1836-37 when Tabriz suffered a commercial crisis caused by overstocking of European goods from Istanbul on credit by Iranian merchants, a number of whom went bankrupt. By 1849 Rudolf Gödel found three Greek firms and one Austrian trading at Tabriz under Russian protection, and five Russian companies owned by Georgians or Armenians. In Tehran there were three Russian Armenians and one Austrian under Russian protection.<sup>80</sup>

Many of the items handled by Russians in this trade were English; Russian products, such as hardware, had a reputation for poor quality.<sup>81</sup> Several lists of the products traded exist from 1800, 1805, 1812 and 1820. Russia exported both raw materials and agricultural products such as caviar, sugar, honey, cochineal, hides and furs, as well as some handicraft manufactures including thread, cloth, leather, jewelry, paper, glass, mirrors, metal products (iron, steel, locks) and gunpowder. Iran exported a range of raw materials and foodstuffs—silk, cotton, rice, dried fruits, nuts, tobacco and madder (for red dye); but also, according to Fraser in 1820/21, its few “manufactured” exports—silk and cotton cloths, including fine gold and silver brocade work—went primarily to Russia.<sup>82</sup> In 1848 we find cotton, wool and silk manufactures exported from Tabriz to Russia to the amount of 116,000 pounds sterling. The woolen and silk textiles were apparently handcrafted; interestingly, Iran’s cotton textile exports to Russia were dyed on *English* cloth.<sup>83</sup> Two products which would come to figure prominently among Iran’s imports by the end of the century were tea and sugar, both of which were enthusiastically promoted by Russia.<sup>84</sup>

Aggregate trade estimates show a steady rise in the trade, with major gains in the aftermaths of the two wars. The second half of the eighteenth century had been an unsettled time for trade with

<sup>80</sup> Rudolf Gödel, *Über den pontischen Handelsweg und die Verhältnisse des europäisch-persischen Verkehrs* (Vienna, 1849), extracts translated pp. 99-103 in Issawi, *EHI*, 101; Berezin, *Puteshestvie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 105.

<sup>81</sup> On quality, see Moritz Wagner, *Travels in Persia, Georgia and Koordistan, with sketches of the Cossacks and the Caucasus* (London, 1856), volume 3, 102-103, cited by Gilbar, “The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century,” 197-98; and Jones, “Trade of Tabriz, 1837-1871,” in Issawi, *EHI*, 114-15. On the preponderance of English goods in the trade of Tabriz, see Berezin, *Puteshestvie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 105.

<sup>82</sup> Lambton, “Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs,” 222-23, 235, 240-41, based on the accounts of Jaubert (1805), Ouseley (1812) and Fraser (1820/21); Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 250; and Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 264.

<sup>83</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 109.

<sup>84</sup> On tea, see *ibid.*, 146; on sugar, see Lambton, “Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs,” 241.

Iran, but Russia was already making inroads in the trade of the north, where most of the population lay. Exports to Iran, according to one set of estimates, rose from 234,454 rubles ca. 1758-60 (against imports from Iran of 321,000), to 325,310 in 1792 and 499,532 in 1815 (no import data are available). By the time of the second war, 1827-29, exports to Iran had reached 1,867,000 rubles and imports were as high as 3,803,000, a tenfold overall increase in the 70 years since 1758.<sup>85</sup>

Comprehensive continuous data are available from 1830 onwards (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1  
Iran's Trade with Russia, 1830-1850  
(yearly averages, in millions of 1896 gold rubles)

Period	From Iran	To Iran	Total
1830-34	3.8	2.6	6.4
1835-39	3.6	1.3	4.0
1840-44	4.7	1.2	5.9
1844-49	5.3	0.9	6.2

Source: Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 8-9, adjusted by Issawi, *EHI*, 142.

These figures suggest that a plateau was reached in the total trade between 1830 and 1850, but one on a considerably higher level than at the turn of the century. The balance was very much in Iran's favor in this trade, and Russia proved a source of badly needed specie for the internal economy and trade with British India (though due to the extensive smuggling operations that occurred on this border, it is hard to say how much of the seeming deficit was real). The average visible deficit in Russia's accounts grew markedly from 1.2 million rubles in the early 1830s to 4.4 million in the late 1840s.

Russia's share of the total trade was similarly imbalanced. At Tabriz in 1848 Russian exports came to a miniscule 1.44 percent of the total, but its proportion of Tabriz's exports abroad was a commanding 55.23 percent.<sup>86</sup> In the total trade of Iran by the 1850s, Issawi estimates that Russia provided under one-tenth of the imports and took one-third of the exports.<sup>87</sup> This represents no great

<sup>85</sup> Ter-Gukasov, *Politicheskie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 145-46.

<sup>86</sup> Calculations mine, from Issawi's figures, *EHI*, 108-109.

<sup>87</sup> Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 235.

overall increase in market share since 1800 when Malcolm put Russia at roughly 15 percent of Iran's total trade.<sup>88</sup> But Russia had determinedly held its own in the face of England's phenomenal rise in the trade, and in absolute terms had seen a significant rise in the value of its own trade. I have seen no data on the profits to be made in this commerce, other than Berezin's 1852 remark that "pistols worth 150 assignat rubles [in Russia] cost 600 rubles in Tabriz."<sup>89</sup>

**Russia's rise to political and commercial hegemony in Iran, 1850s-1914.** The advantages of Russian trade in Iran, which had been spearheaded by the commercial treaties wrung from the Qajars through two wars, received a further impetus in the second half of the nineteenth century from developments in Russia itself. The "Witte system" encouraged internal industrialization and railroad-building as platforms for competing more successfully in Europe and on a world scale. Russia's index of industrialization leaped from 13.5 in 1865-76 to 100 by 1905-13 as the country struggled to catch up from its relatively underdeveloped economic base. Railroads built in the Caucasus in the 1870s and the Transcaspian region to Iran's northeast in the 1880s generated demands for labor and agricultural staples, and greatly increased access to Iran's markets for the fledgling Russian manufactures.<sup>90</sup> These advantages would be compounded by subsidies, tariffs and other active state policies to be detailed below. After the Russian state stabilized its authority in the Caucasus by the late 1850s, it expanded inexorably into Central Asia, annexing the khanates of Bukhara, Khokand and Khiva with the cities of Tashkent and Samarqand, from 1865 to 1873 (see Map 4.2 in Appendix II). This put its armies in position to encroach on Iran's ill-defined borders in the area and with Afghanistan by advancing toward Marv, which was occupied and annexed in March 1884.<sup>91</sup> This process led to a quiet loss of Iranian territory in the turbulent and semi-independent Turkoman tribal areas, which gradually came under more effective Russian rule. It also placed Russian merchants in position to gain entry into the markets of Iranian Khurasan, with access to its wheat, and later, Russian-introduced cotton.

<sup>88</sup> Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 264.

<sup>89</sup> Berezin, *Puteshestvie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 106.

<sup>90</sup> V. F. Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture in Iran," pp. 547-591 in A. L. Udovitch, editor, *The Islamic Middle East, 700-1900*, 563; Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 154; Issawi, *EHI*, 143.

<sup>91</sup> Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 104-106, 117-32, 144.

With these territorial and economic changes in the Russian empire came a shift in Russian methods in Iran to a more peaceful emphasis on economic penetration—what Marvin Entner has called “ruble imperialism.” Like the English, the Russians sought concessions, influence over institutions, and increased trade. The most important concessions they obtained were in fisheries, road-building, telegraphs, railroads and banking.<sup>92</sup> Fishing on the southern Caspian banks was in Russian hands by the 1870s, and confirmed by an exclusive concession to the Liazonov company in 1876 that was renewed in 1887 and 1893 to give the company control until 1913/14. The catch was valued at 600,000 rubles in 1890 and grew to 1 million by 1900 and 2.25 million in 1913 (9.3-10.5 rubles equalled a pound sterling ca. 1900). The fisheries and Russian roadworks employed some 5,000 workers in 1914.<sup>93</sup> Several concessions for the construction of roads in the north were granted in the 1880s and 1890s, and by 1914 the Russians had built some 800 kilometers of good road linking important northern trade centers with each other, and more significantly, with Russia: Tehran-Anzali (379 kms., completed 1899), Tabriz-Julfa (135 kms., after 1902) and Qazvin-Hamadan (243 kms., 1906). It has been argued that the tolls collected on these roads failed to pay for the 15 million rubles of capital invested in them, yet trade and communication between Russia and Iran were immeasurably enhanced.<sup>94</sup> Another series of agreements permitted Russian construction of telegraph lines from Julfa to Astarabad and Mashhad to Sistan; the Russian government had 1 million rubles invested in these by 1914.<sup>95</sup>

The story of the various railway schemes and agreements is instructive in showing how Britain and especially Russia acted to preserve their own interests and thwart each other's at Iran's expense. The importance of railroads was recognized as early as 1864 by the Iranian consul at Tiflis (Russian

<sup>92</sup> For a full list of concessions granted to the Russian government or its citizens from 1881 to 1893 see Litten, *Persien*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 360.

<sup>93</sup> Marvin L. Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations, 1828-1914*, University of Florida Monographs, Social Sciences, number 28 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965), 77; Kumar, “Economic Background of British Diplomacy,” 232; Z. Z. Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost i zarozhdenie rabocheho klassa Irana v kontse XIX-nachale XX vv.*, extracts translated pp. 42-52, 297-300 in Issawi, *EHI*, here cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 261; Litten, *Persien*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 360. There is some discrepancy in the dates of the fishery concessions in the various sources. On the value of the ruble, see Rabino, “An Economist's Notes on Persia,” 267, and Kumar, “Economic Background of British Diplomacy,” 232.

<sup>94</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 157, 200; Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 50-51.

<sup>95</sup> Litten, *Persien*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 360-61.

Georgia) who wrote to Tehran:

Experience has shown and it is open to no doubt or uncertainty whatsoever that railroads and steamships give rise to trade, even if established in the Turkoman desert and the Dead Sea. In addition, the establishment of a railroad in Iran will in three years revolutionize the country, bring order and civilization to the state and nation, and be the greatest source of power. In one word, Iran will become a paradise.<sup>96</sup>

In 1874 the Falkenhagen concession provided for a Russian-built railroad from Julfa to Tabriz, but the Russian government did not advance the necessary capital. In 1888 the shah first conceded orally "the priority of the English Government over others in the construction of a southern railway to Tehran," and then concluded an agreement with the Russian government "that it should grant to a Russian Company the construction in Persia of railways to anywhere where it may be advantageous to the commercial interest of both Governments." The Russians wished above all to prevent British goods from reaching the north in vast quantities, and assured this by obtaining a wide-reaching agreement on November 10, 1890 that "The Persian Government engages, for the space of ten years ... neither itself to construct a railway in Persian territory, nor to permit nor grant a concession for the construction of railways to a Company or other persons." This agreement, renewed in December 1899, meant that railway projects weren't even proposed again through 1910. Russia continued to block German projects in Iran with the Potsdam Agreement of August 19, 1911, and Britain withdrew from a joint Russian-French-British project to cross Iran in 1912-13.<sup>97</sup> The absence of railroads effectively ensured that Russian commercial hegemony would be undisputed in the north and that the English would remain dominant in the south, but the means of transport were correspondingly limited throughout the country.

A key institution of economic penetration was the Russian Bank (variously known as the Russo-Persian Bank or the Loan and Discount Bank—"Uchietno-ssudnyi Bank"), which was privately operated without conspicuous success from 1891 to 1897. Thereafter it was directly managed by the Russian Ministry of Finance and became a very flexible instrument of state policy in

<sup>96</sup> Cited by Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 29.

<sup>97</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 155-59; Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 31-32; texts of the "Russo-Persian Railway Agreement," October 28/November 10, 1890, and the "Convention (Potsdam) on the Baghdad Railroad and Russian Interests in Persia: Russia and Germany," August 6/19, 1911, pp. 207, 267-268 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I.

the quest for control of Iran's state and economy and in the competition with the English. It extended attractive loans to clients who were dealing in Russian goods; when it wanted a client it would "invariably ask what rates the British Bank quoted, and gave its own [fractionally more favorable] quotations accordingly." The bank's loans were often contingent on pledging property mortgages as a security and it came to hold 48 million rubles worth of such mortgages by 1914. It also entered the market directly, importing tea from India, sending a caravan to Sistan in 1902, opening a warehouse for Russian goods. It cut into local and foreign merchants' business by exporting Iranian products to Russia. This was accomplished by advancing credits to peasants through intermediaries and to landlords, taking options to buy silk, rice, cotton, dried fruits and carpets. In the revival of the Gilan silk industry after 1889 it eventually drove the French and Greek middlemen out of the market; they were replaced by Iranians, Armenians and Russians.<sup>98</sup> Major loans were made to the Qajar state as well—in 1900, 22.5 million rubles (2.4 million pounds sterling) at five percent interest to be repaid in 75 years, on the condition that Iran use the loan to pay off all other creditors, especially the (British) Imperial Bank of Persia.<sup>99</sup> The 10 million ruble loan of 1902 was made in exchange for the Julfa-Tehran road concession, to be owned by the bank.<sup>100</sup> Though the bank sometimes acted at cross purposes with private Russian investors as well as its own economic interest on occasion in these activities,<sup>101</sup> by 1902 Russia had won the bank competition with England as evidenced in the terms of the 1903 customs treaty (analyzed below). By 1914 the bank controlled an astounding 127,000,000 rubles of the 163,750,000 in total Russian capital invested in Iran.<sup>102</sup> The bank's share by itself thus exceeded that of all capital investments by the British government and its citizens in Iran on the eve of World War 1.

There are a few cases of Russian efforts to establish modern industries in Iran. In 1890-91, a match factory was built near Tehran with initial capital of 20,000 pounds sterling, but it failed due to

<sup>98</sup> See Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 41-44, 75-76, who cites Sir Valentine Chirol, *The Middle Eastern Question* (London, 1903), 60; Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 238.

<sup>99</sup> Kumar, "Economic Background of British Diplomacy," 232.

<sup>100</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 170.

<sup>101</sup> See Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 45.

<sup>102</sup> Calculations based on Litten, *Persien*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 361.

Austrian and Swedish competition.<sup>103</sup> Some eight cotton-ginning factories were built by private Russian capitalists or the bank between 1904 and 1911. Five of these were in Nishapur, and two in Bandar Gaz; most used oil-run engines.<sup>104</sup> Russia thwarted the "modern sugar mill" built in 1895 by subsidizing its own sugar imports into Iran.<sup>105</sup> Far more numerous than the (at most) few hundred workers employed in these early Russian-built factories, were the many thousands of Iranians who migrated to Russia to work in industry, railroads, petroleum and the docks, and who will be discussed in section II below.

The vast majority of Russian companies operating in Iran were engaged in the export-import trade rather than productive enterprises within Iran. Though Entner states that "few Russian firms established offices in Persian cities," Litten found 23 large firms and "numerous smaller Russian firms" in Iran by 1914, and some 5,070 Russian subjects, many of them Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Georgians, resided in Iran at that time.<sup>106</sup> These companies conducted much of the foreign trade of Iran, from such northern commercial centers as Tabriz and Tehran, as far south as Yazd, and had their own commercial representatives (*tajir-bashis*) in many cities.<sup>107</sup>

Several developments aided the efforts of these companies in Iran. The revolutions in steam and railway transport cut costs dramatically: when a railroad connected the Russian cities of Poti, Tiflis and Baku in the 1870s and 1880s, for example, the cost of transport from Poti to Tabriz fell to one-sixth that of the Trabzon-Tabriz route used by other Europeans and the Iranians.<sup>108</sup> Steamships first appeared on the Caspian in the 1840s, and by 1867, 14 steamers and many sailing ships plied the trade from Astrakhan to the Iranian port of Anzali.<sup>109</sup> The Transcaspian railway reached Ashkabad, 150 miles from Mashhad, by 1889, thus linking Russia with Khurasan.<sup>110</sup> Another advantage

<sup>103</sup> Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-i Shayagan ya Auza'-yi Iqtisadi-yi Iran* [Abundant Treasure, or, the Economic Situation of Iran] (Berlin: Kavch, 1335 Q./1916), 94.

<sup>104</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 62, based on Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-i Shayagan*, and Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*

<sup>105</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture in Iran," 565.

<sup>106</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 45; Litten, *Persien*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 360-61; Issawi, *EHI*, 23.

<sup>107</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 118; Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 219 note 12; W. M. Floor, "The Merchants (*tujjār*) in Qājār Iran," pp. 101-135 in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, volume 126, number 1 (1976), 110.

<sup>108</sup> Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade," 23.

<sup>109</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 168.

<sup>110</sup> Consul-General MacLean, "Report on the Trade of Khorasan for the Year 1889-90," pp. 122-124 in Issawi, *EHI*, 124.

came with the change of Russia's tariff policy in 1883. European goods had been allowed to pass through Russia to Iran tax exempt from 1821 to 1831 and again from 1846 to 1883. In 1881 European trade through Russia came to 7.8 million rubles, double that of Russia's own trade with Iran. After the merchants and industrialists of Moscow petitioned the Tsar to put a high tariff on this transit trade, it was cut to a miniscule 50,000 rubles by 1885, forcing the Europeans to take the longer, more difficult routes north from the Gulf ports or the Trabzon route on the Black Sea, and giving a substantial edge to Russian merchants in the north.<sup>111</sup> Finally, in 1903 Russia negotiated a new tariff treaty with Iran that disadvantaged Britain enormously. The previous uniform five percent duty was revised on a per item basis: for (British) tea it rose to 100 percent and on cotton to eight percent, on (Russian) kerosine and sugar it fell to two and four percent. Opium, wheat and linseed bound for the British empire had their export duties raised; cotton and rice going to Russia had their duties reduced or eliminated.<sup>112</sup>

Turning to the items in this trade, it is clear that Iran increasingly tended to provide raw materials while Russia was starting to export some of its new industrial manufactures and processed food products. Iran's textile exports to Russia declined from an average of 649,000 rubles in 1875-78 to 197,000 in 1885-87 and further in the 1890s, due in part to the growth of Russia's own textile industry (at eight percent a year in the 1890s) and a protective tariff of about 50 percent imposed in 1877.<sup>113</sup> Shawls still accounted for 10-20 percent of Mashhad's exports to Russia in 1898-1900.<sup>114</sup> And Russia purchased most of the carpets produced in Khurasan, where the Russian Bank financed most of the production, transported on the Transcaspian Railway through Russia.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, five-sixths of Iran's exports to Russia in 1903 were raw materials or agricultural produce, especially cotton, dried fruits and rice, but also fish, wheat, wool, tobacco and tea.<sup>116</sup> Chief among these was cotton. After 1890, practically all of Iran's cotton went to Russia, where it constituted 15

<sup>111</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 96, 143.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>113</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 300-301, citing Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962), 129.

<sup>114</sup> Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 284 table D.

<sup>115</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 75.

<sup>116</sup> MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137.

percent of Russia's total supply. The trade grew from 848,700 rubles in 1877 to 7,501,000 a year between 1906 and 1909. Iranian cotton undersold American cotton in Russia by two rubles per pud (a 36-lb. unit) in 1896, and it cost one ruble less than Russian-grown cotton. This crop came to replace wheat in vast areas of Khurasan.<sup>117</sup> Russia took 80-90 percent of Iran's dried fruits and nuts (including dried grapes used to make spirits in Poland, almonds, pistachios, currants and apricots), and exports of these items rose from 1 million rubles in 1870 to 5.9 million in 1900 and 10.6 million in 1913.<sup>118</sup> Russia also received 97-99 percent of Iran's rice exports, mainly to feed the population of Turkestan, which was undergoing rapid commercialization of its agriculture (and a shift to cotton, which required only one-tenth as much water as rice). Export levels doubled between 1891 and 1913 to become 14 percent of Iran's total exports to Russia.<sup>119</sup> Wheat too was supplied by Khurasan across the border to Turkestan.

Heading the list of Russia's exports to Iran were sugar and textiles, both subsidized by the government. In the case of sugar this began in 1896 and made Russian sugar one-third cheaper in Iran than in Russia (!). Consequently sugar rose from 15 percent of Russia's exports to Iran in 1884 to 66 percent by 1890; after 1900 Russia had control of 77-82 percent of the sugar market in Iran, which had formerly belonged to British India and France. Exports reached 23,370,000 rubles in 1913/14.<sup>120</sup> Tea was another important processed agricultural export, and Russia accounted for 37-39 percent of Iran's considerable consumption of imports in 1909-11, with the value of teas exported in 1913/14 at 3,610,000 rubles.<sup>121</sup> The second Russian export to Iran was textiles; here too the government paid its merchants a premium on textiles sold in Iran starting in 1892. Even before the subsidy Russian exports had increased impressively from 12-20,000 rubles before 1863 to 225,000 in 1870, 1.2 million in 1880 and 2 million in 1891. After the subsidization they rose dramatically, to 18.4 million rubles in 1913/14. This represented an astounding 53 percent of all Russia's textile

<sup>117</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 74; Ter-Gukasov, *Politicheskie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 146; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 36.

<sup>118</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 74.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-68, 71; Issawi, *EHI*, 71 note 3; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 270.

<sup>121</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 71.

exports, and was 51 percent of the cotton textile market of Iran.<sup>122</sup> Russia's other principal exports to Iran consisted of manufactures such as petroleum and kerosine (95 percent of the market, 1.8 million rubles in 1913/14), metal products (20-50 percent of the market, 1.1 million rubles in 1913/14), iron, glass, matches and paper. Seventy-five to 90 percent of Iran's imported flour (2,861,000 rubles' worth in 1913/14) also came from Russia.<sup>123</sup>

The turning point in the rise of Russian trade, relatively and absolutely, came in the 1880s and 1890s. With railways in place, internal industrialization accelerating, government promotion of trade, transport projects in northern Iran and prohibition of the European transit trade through Russia, plus the activities of the Russian Bank and premiums on cotton textiles and sugar, Russian commerce forged ahead of England's in Iran. Concentrating on the more prosperous and populous northern markets, Russians came to dominate the trade of Azerbaijan, Gilan, Mazandaran, the Tehran area and Khurasan.<sup>124</sup> As Table 4.2 shows, Russia had drawn

Table 4.2  
Total Trade of Iran with Russia and Britain, 1875-1914  
(in pounds sterling)

Year	With Russia	With Britain
1875	ca. 1.0 million	1.7 million
1895	3.4-3.5 million	3.0 million
1904	3.75-5.5 million	2.5-3.0 million
1914	12.0 million	4.5 million

Sources: Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans, 734; Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics*, 228; Bausani, *The Persians*, 168; Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 93; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 267; MacLean, "Report on Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137; Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 8-9; Issawi, *EHI*, 142.

even to if not surpassed England as Iran's leading trading partner by 1895; the gap continued to

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 69, 71. See also Rabino's data on Mashhad, 1898-1900: "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 283 table C.

<sup>123</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 71; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 270, 283 table C.

<sup>124</sup> On Tehran see the letter of September 10, 1878 by the British consul Mackenzie, cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 144; on Khurasan around 1900 see Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 271.

widen through the next decade (though estimates vary somewhat as to how much it was). By 1914 it was indisputable: Russia provided 56 percent of Iran's imports and took 72 percent of her exports, to Britain's 28 and 13 percent, respectively.<sup>125</sup> The balance of trade also slowly shifted into Russia's favor: from 1875-85 Iran had an average annual surplus of 3.75 million gold rubles; from 1885-95 this was reduced to 1.75 million, and to 1.55 million in 1895-1905. The balance reversed and was 2.6 million gold rubles annually in Russia's favor by 1905-10, and this ballooned to 10.7 million (about one million pounds sterling) by 1910-14.<sup>126</sup> The extraordinary degree of Russian control over Iran in the economic sphere by the outbreak of the First World War has been eloquently stated by Entner: "To a remarkable extent, Persia had been drawn into Russia's economic orbit and was a functioning part of her economy."<sup>127</sup>

This control was mirrored on the political plane. In 1904, the instructions of the Russian Foreign Ministry to a new minister in Tehran read:

The main object that has been pursued by us ... in the course of a long contact with Persia, may be defined in the following manner: To preserve the integrity and inviolability of the Shah's domains, not seeking territorial increases for ourselves and not permitting the dominance of a third power, gradually to subject Persia to our domination without the violation, however, of either the external signs of Persia's independence or her internal structure. In other words, our task is: politically to make Persia obedient and useful; that is sufficiently strong to be a tool in our hands—economically, to preserve for ourselves the major share of the Persian market for free and exclusive exploitation by Russian efforts and capital. This close relationship and its consequent economic and political results, when attained by us, will result in a substantial foundation upon which we can carry on fruitful activity...<sup>128</sup>

The specific classes among which Russia expanded its hold from economic to political influence extended from the merchants with whom it had dealings, and to a lesser extent northern peasants and tribespeople, all the way to the court. The Russian Bank gave loans and advances not only to Muzaffar al-Din Shah (ruled 1896-1906) but also to key political figures, notably Muhammad 'Ali, the heir to the throne after 1896, whose advances amounted to 1,627,000 rubles by 1907, the year he became shah.<sup>129</sup> Another key state institution where Russia came to have preponderant influence

<sup>125</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 64 table 9.

<sup>126</sup> See Issawi's summary of Entner's data in *EHI*, 142.

<sup>127</sup> Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 77.

<sup>128</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 41-42.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

was the weak Qajar army. In 1879 it was agreed to form an elite "Cossack Brigade" of infantry and artillery which was set up in 1885, initially as a bodyguard for the court and foreign legations. By the 1890s this was a division of about 10,500 soldiers and cavalry commanded by 131 Russian commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and 202 Iranians, with units in Tehran, Isfahan, Mashhad, Hamadan, Gilan, Mazandaran, Ardabil and Urumiya. The languages used were Turki and Russian; three times a day the soldiers were ordered to shout in Turki "Hurrah Emperor, chok saghol Shah!" (Hurrah to the [Russian] Emperor, long life to the Shah!).<sup>130</sup> From its ranks would emerge the leader of the 1921 coup and founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, a story that will be told in Chapter Five.

Russia's "Great Game" with England resumed with the Crimean War in the 1850s, and continued through the concession hunting and trade we have already chronicled in the 1860s to 1880s. In the 1890s Russia began to pull away in the peaceful, gradual economic competition for control in Iran, but on a world scale still lagged behind other imperialist powers and possessed internal military and industrial weaknesses.<sup>131</sup> The attempted revolution of 1905 and the external defeat by a rising Japan in their 1904-5 war brought these to light, and slowed down absolute Russian hegemony in Iran. The existing balance of forces between Russia and England was accurately reflected and formalized in the "Anglo-Russian Convention on Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet" of August 1907. The preamble to this document claims that Great Britain and Russia are "mutually engaged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia," but goes on to state that "each of them has, for geographical and economic reasons, a special interest in the maintenance of peace and order in certain provinces of Persia." Therefore, Great Britain pledged not to seek concessions "of a political or commercial nature" for itself, its citizens or any "third Powers," in a zone defined "beyond a line starting from Kasr-e Shirin, passing through Isfahan, Yezd, Kakhk, and ending at a point on the Russian frontier at

<sup>130</sup> Donald N. Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran* (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1975), 7.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Lenin's remark: "In Russia, capitalist imperialism of the latest type has fully revealed itself in the policy of tsarism toward Persia, Manchuria and Mongolia, but, in general, military and feudal imperialism is predominant in Russia....," from *Socialism and War* (1915), in V.I. Lenin, *The Lenin Anthology*, selected, edited and introduced by Robert C. Tucker (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 189.

the intersection of the Russian and Afghan frontiers" (including the cities named—see Map 4.3 in Appendix II), and Russia engaged not to do the same "beyond a line going from the Afghan frontier by way of Gazik, Birjand, Kerman, and ending at Bandar 'Abbas," while between these lines would lie a neutral buffer zone in which neither would oppose concessions to the other.<sup>132</sup>

Russia thus "received" the wealthiest and most populous provinces of Iran, along with the capital and other key political centers, while Britain's sphere was quite limited. The oil fields (discovered a year later) lay in the neutral zone. The Iranian response was generally indignant, and properly forms part of the events of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11, to be discussed in Chapter Five. The poet Iraj Mirza's comment sums up the state to which Iran had been *de facto* reduced: "The grocer's shop will be despoiled, owing to the agreement between the mice and the cat."<sup>133</sup> The "Great Game" came to a quiet end with this peaceful division of interests in Iran and the rise of a mutual threat to Russia and England in the form of a belligerent German empire in the years from the Agreement to the First World War. Russia dominated Iranian affairs even more thoroughly with a military occupation that ended the Constitutional Revolution in 1911, and Britain acquiesced in this, content to have a stable, pliant government and secure in its access to Iran's oil and India's hinterland. Thus Russia enjoyed unchallenged hegemony in Iran on the eve of 1914, having overcome both internal and external opposition to do so. The story of Iranian resistance to this domination, and the unexpected outcome of the 1920s, will be told in Chapter Five.

### **I.C. Iran's Relations with Other Countries**

As Table 4.3 makes clear, no other country challenged the predominance of Russia or the distant but solid second place of England in Iran's foreign trade by the eve of World War I. The Ottoman Empire was in third place overall, with 3.49 percent of imports and 8.74 of exports, roughly four times less than the trade of Great Britain. Germany had more of the imports (4.74 percent) but

<sup>132</sup> "Anglo-Russian Convention on Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet," August 18/31, 1907, ratifications exchanged at St. Petersburg, September 10/23, 1907, pp. 265-267 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I.

<sup>133</sup> Cited by Vartan Gregorian, *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan. Politics of Reform and Modernization, 1880-1946* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 212.

Table 4.3  
Trade of Iran, By Country, 1913/14  
(in thousands of rubles)

Trading Partner	Imports to Iran	Percent	Exports from Iran	Percent
Russia	64,000	55.53	54,371	71.57
Great Britain/India	32,032	27.76	10,280	13.53
Ottoman Empire	4,021	3.49	6,637	8.74
Germany	5,468	4.74	531	.69
France	3,533	3.06	826	1.09
Italy	1,008	.87	2,614	3.44
Belgium	2,740	2.38	41	.05
Austria-Hungary	1,606	1.39	130	.17
Afghanistan	899	.78	534	.70

Source: Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 64 table 9, calculations mine.

far fewer of Iran's exports, than the Ottomans. France and Italy came next, followed by Belgium, Austria-Hungary and Afghanistan. All of these countries combined provided only 17 percent of Iran's imports and took only 15 percent of her exports. The situation had changed drastically since the start of the Qajars' reign in 1800. Then, according to Malcolm's report, Iran's main trading partners were Afghanistan and Central Asia (33.75 percent), the Ottoman empire (26 percent), and India (19.5 percent), followed by Russia with 15 percent, while the English EIC had only 3 percent, barely ahead of the Gulf and Red Sea principalities (2.25 percent).<sup>134</sup> A major change, then, was the rise of the Europeans as trading partners, from under 19 percent (to include a backward Russia) to about 94 percent (transferring British India to the European column), between 1800 and 1914.

**Iran's relations with the other European countries and the United States.** France played a major political role in the events of the Napoleonic wars in Iran, followed by a modest economic relationship in the nineteenth century and a growing cultural prestige in Iran. In 1807 a wide-ranging Treaty of Alliance was drawn up, with the French recognizing Georgia as part of Iran and promising to organize Iran's army "according to the principles of European military science," and the shah undertaking to sever relations with Britain and grant the French army right of passage to

<sup>134</sup> Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 262-67, calculations mine.

India.<sup>135</sup> Napoleon sent a mission with 70 technical and military experts to Iran, remarking rather presciently: "Persia is now crushed between Russian and English possessions. The more these possessions are extended towards the Persian frontiers, the more she has to fear eventual aggrandizement. She runs the risk of becoming an English province like the north of India..."<sup>136</sup> In July 1807 however the French made peace with the Russians; when this news reached Iran in 1808 Fath 'Ali Shah could not understand why Napoleon had not made the return of Georgia a condition of his treaty with the tsar when he had him at a disadvantage. The French mission left in disgrace in 1809.<sup>137</sup>

Relations slowly grew up again by mid-century. The French had one percent of imports to Tabriz in 1848. They received most favored nation status in 1855; in Blau's estimates of 1858, they took about 200,000 pounds sterling of exports from Trabzon, their 30.59 percent share topping the Ottomans (29.41 percent) and England (23.53 percent). They still provided only 1.39 percent of imports.<sup>138</sup> The items they took from Iran included raw silk, tobacco and cotton (during the American Civil War); they provided sugar (of poor quality, eventually displaced by the Russians), silk cocoons and silk fabrics, and other manufactures, including porcelain.<sup>139</sup> This trade seems to have reached a peak already in the 1860s, and was damaged by the silkworm disease, drop in the demand for cotton, and general decline of the Tabriz-Trabzon route after this. Bharier found France handling 7 percent of Iran's trade in 1900; this had fallen to 2 percent by 1913/14.<sup>140</sup> France's position in Iran by this point derived more from its cultural than its economic ties: 200 of the 500 Iranian students in Europe in 1918 were in France (the first had been sent in 1815). In Iran, the French had operated schools and religious missions since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>135</sup> See "Treaty of Alliance (Finkenstein): France and Persia," May 4, 1807, p. 77 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I.

<sup>136</sup> "Napoleon's Instructions to the Chief of the French Mission to Persia," May 10, 1807, pp. 78-81 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 79.

<sup>137</sup> Savory, "British and French Diplomacy in Persia," 35, 39, 43-44.

<sup>138</sup> Ernst Otto Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens* (Berlin, 1858), extracts translated pp. 132-135 in Issawi, *EHI*; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 159; Issawi, *EHI*, 108-109.

<sup>139</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 146-47, 245; Jones, "Tabriz," in Issawi, *EHI*, 114-14; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 48; Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 60.

<sup>140</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 10; Issawi, *EHI*, 147. See also the questions raised by the French consul as early as 1869: "Dispatches to Minister of Foreign Affairs," in Issawi, *EHI*, 147-48.

<sup>141</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 23, 147.

Iran's economic relations with Germany started in the 1840s and picked up considerable momentum by the outbreak of World War I. German coarse cottons and other goods such as toys, watches and lithographs are listed among the items to be found in Tabriz in 1843; some of these made the journey inland to Tehran. In 1848, German imports accounted for 4 percent of the trade of Tabriz, consisting mostly of woolen cloth.<sup>142</sup> By 1873 most of the broadcloth imported by the Armenian merchants of Tabriz came from Germany (it was in fashion among minor government employees and servants). Germans were also active in the carpet exporting business, and imported loaf sugar, glassware, gold, lace and embroidery.<sup>143</sup> According to Platt, "By the '90s the Germans were actively claiming a share of the Gulf's foreign trade."<sup>144</sup>

This presence was given a boost when Kaiser Wilhelm II announced a German "world policy" on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the German empire in 1896. The Germans then made colonial acquisitions in China and Africa. In Iran, the German ambassador wrote home in 1909: "It is not that we would want to carry out a forward policy here in Persia. Persia is a land in which little is to be gained. Still ... we should use our position here in exchange for Russian concessions elsewhere."<sup>145</sup> In 1910-11 the Potsdam Convention pledged Germany not to seek railroad, navigation or telegraph concessions in northern Iran in exchange for a Russian promise to link Tehran to the German-built Baghdad railroad when it reached the Iranian frontier (which it never did).<sup>146</sup> There was a surge of German investments in early modern factories from 1910 to 1914, including a large construction works and weaving factory at Tabriz, a brick works and steam mill at Urumiya and a textile mill at Qazvin. Interestingly, in all of these enterprises they tried to involve Iranian merchants as partners; there was financial help from the German government as well.<sup>147</sup> With all of

<sup>142</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 197-98, citing Wagner, *Travels in Persia*, III, 102-103; Issawi, *EHI*, 108-109, 116.

<sup>143</sup> Jones, "Tabriz," in Issawi, *EHI*, 114, 115; Lucien Rey, "Persia in Perspective," pp. 32-55 and 69-98 in *New Left Review*, numbers 19 (March-April 1963) and 20 (Summer 1963), number 19, 46; Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 75.

<sup>144</sup> Platt, *Finance, Trade, and Politics*, 246.

<sup>145</sup> Cited in McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 108. On Germany's imperial expansion, see Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 161, 163.

<sup>146</sup> "Convention (Potsdam) on the Baghdad Railroad and Russian Interests in Persia: Russia and Germany," August 6/19, 1907, pp. 267-268 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I.

this, German trade was only 2.5 percent of Iran's foreign trade in 1913/14.

Iran's trade with Austria also goes back to at least the 1840s, when fine Austrian glassware was sold in Tabriz. Other items exported to Iran were cloth, silk fabrics and sugar, while silk cocoons were imported to Austria. After 1843 there was an Austrian shipping line between Istanbul and Trabzon; Gödel noted one Austrian firm at Tabriz and another at Tehran under Russian protection in 1849. Austria accounted for 2-3.5 percent of Trabzon's imports and exports (ca. 80,000 pounds sterling) in the 1850s; the amount rose to about 170,000 pounds in 1913/14, but the share fell to one percent or less. One cultural connection was the use of Austrian instructors at the Dar al-Fonun, Iran's first technical college.<sup>148</sup>

Italian vessels brought a few goods from Istanbul to Trabzon as early as the 1820s on what an 1873 English report referred to as "two little miserable coasting craft of Italian origin—all that remained of the old glories of Venetian and Genoese commerce with these ports."<sup>149</sup> In the 1850s, Italy took a modest 1.22 percent of Trabzon's exports (mostly silk?). After 1900 the Italian bankers Nearco Castelli and Brothers were active at Kirman in the carpet business; another Italian import from Iran was cocoon silk. In 1913/14, Italy's 3.44 percent of Iran's exports ranked it fourth after Russia, England and the Ottomans. Italy provided less than 1 percent of Iran's imports.<sup>150</sup>

Belgian manufactures are reported at Tehran in the 1840s. Belgium and the Netherlands together provided 1.39 percent of Trabzon's imports in the 1850s. Later in the century, three industrial enterprises were managed by Belgian investors: a gasworks for street lighting at Tehran in 1891/2, a glass factory, and a sugar factory at Kahrizak near Tehran which employed 300 workers from 1895 to 1900. All failed due to poor planning and lack of raw materials. More important than these, or Belgium's 1 percent of early twentieth century trade, was the use of Belgian officials in the

<sup>147</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 65-66.

<sup>148</sup> On Austria, see Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 197-98; Rey, "Persia in Perspective," 46; Inalcik and Steensgaard, "Harir," 210; Jones, "Tabriz," in Issawi, *EHI*, 115; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137; Gödel, *Über den pontischen Handelsweg*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 101; Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade," 20; Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 134; Bausani, *The Persians*, 167.

<sup>149</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 93 note 2, quoting an 1873 English report from Erzerum.

<sup>150</sup> Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 134; Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 291; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137.

Iranian customs. First tried at Kirmanshah and in Azerbaijan in March 1899, they were given the whole system the next year, and increased the customs revenues by 60 percent. Protests against them by Iran's merchants formed part of the background of the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>151</sup>

Nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon and coffee from Dutch Java are part of a list of items imported by Iran in 1805, but in general the Dutch trade was barely a shadow of what it had been with the Safavids in the seventeenth century. In 1850 there were disputes over the duties to be paid, as the Netherlands charged 5 to 12 percent on Iran's goods at Batavia but sought most favored nation status in Iran. As mentioned above, Belgium and the Netherlands together took 1.39 percent of Trabzon's exports in the 1850s, but these may well have been mostly Belgian. Gilbar found the Dutch in the Gulf trade, ca. 1871, with "a share in the export of grain and the import of textiles, sugar, and a few other commodities," and Jones noted a temporary Dutch monopoly of tea at Tabriz in 1873. Batavia still provided some tea in 1903 and "white and grey shirtings" from Holland are mentioned in a 1904 trade report, but Holland does not appear as a trading partner in 1913/14 (Table 4.3). One concession—for oil in 1884—proved unproductive.<sup>152</sup>

A few other European countries had some contact with Qajar Iran. Greek merchants were fairly active under European and Ottoman protection, as at Tabriz in 1859 where five commercial houses traded English textiles for Iran's raw silk. There had been three Greek companies there under Russian protection in 1849. A British report from Tabriz in 1873 said of the Greeks: "Their command of capital and systematic method of trading quickly gave them the advantage over their Oriental rivals." As related above, the firm of Ralli Brothers was owned by Greeks, protected by the Russians and sold English products. In Tabriz it was generous in advancing credit and offering discounts and had Iranian cloth designs printed in England. When Ralli withdrew from the silk trade in 1871 another Greek firm, Pascalidi Brothers, replaced it. Though Greece was still a trading

<sup>151</sup> On Belgium, see Issawi, *EHI*, 116; Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 134; Eteocle Lorini, *La Persia economica* (Rome, 1900), extracts translated pp. 305-308 in Issawi, *EHI*; Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-i Shayagan*, 94; Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 49; Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 48.

<sup>152</sup> On Holland, see Jaubert's 1805 account in Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 222; Issawi, *EHI*, 73; Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 134; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 201-202; Jones, "Tabriz," in Issawi, *EHI*, 114; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 140; Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, I, 24-25.

partner in the early twentieth century, it captured less than one percent of Iran's foreign trade, and doesn't figure in Table 4.3. The same can be said of Switzerland, Spain and Sweden. The Swiss had a trading company at Tabriz in 1859, and in Blau's 1858 estimates, provided an extraordinary 22.85 percent of Trabzon's imports (about 400,000 pounds sterling—a distant second to Britain), but they were no longer in the 1914 trade picture, declining in significance along with the Trabzon route. Spain signed a treaty of amity, commerce and navigation with Iran as early as 1842, but no other data on its actual trade appeared in my sources. Sweden is named as a trading partner for the early twentieth century, but the amounts involved must have been very small.<sup>153</sup>

The official American presence in Iran began in the 1850s. The United States signed a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation with the Iranian chargé d'affaires at Istanbul on October 9, 1851, but this never entered into effect when the shah did not respond to the U.S. Senate's request for most favored nation status. This status was reciprocally granted in an 1856 treaty between the two countries, with the U.S. to have consuls at Tehran, Tabriz and Bushire and Iran to have them in Washington, New York and New Orleans. American trade amounted to a modest 16,000 pounds sterling in imports to Trabzon (0.89 percent) in the 1850s; in 1887 the American minister reported that there were no American business firms in Tehran. The power of the United States in Asia generally increased during the course of the nineteenth century, particularly with the annexations of Hawaii and the Philippines in 1898. In Iran, U.S. companies such as the Eastern Rug and Trading Company of New York became active in the Kirman carpet market from 1900 to World War I. During the Constitutional Revolution, an American oil executive, W. Morgan Shuster was chosen by the Majlis as a neutral figure outside Anglo-Russian-French-German rivalries to be treasurer-general of Iran in charge of regulating government finances. The reforms he instituted and the interests he offended form part of the history of the Constitutional Revolution (Chapter Five). His choice reflects

<sup>153</sup> On Greek trade, see Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 201 note 119; Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 238; Issawi, *EHI*, 104; Berezin, *Puteshestvie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 107; Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 73, citing the 1873 British report from Tabriz; Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 55.

On Switzerland, see Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 201 note 119; Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 134. On Spain, see Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I, 158. On Sweden, see Ziya al-Din Sadrzadeh, *Saderat-i Iran* [Exports of Iran] (Tehran, 1346/1967), extracts translated pp. 148-151 in Issawi, *EHI*, 149.

both the peripheral nature of Iran's relations with the United States in this period, and the budding relationship between the two countries.<sup>154</sup>

**Iran's relations with Asian and Middle Eastern countries.** The Ottoman Empire was consistently the most important non-European sovereign nation in Iran's foreign trade in the Qajar period, though its relative standing and power declined over the course of the century. In 1800 it was the second trading partner of Iran (after Afghanistan), with about 60,000 pounds sterling and 26 percent of total trade. The Ottomans exported European woolen goods, textiles of their own from Aleppo and Damascus, glass, hardware, iron, steel, dyestuffs and opium, and imported Kashmiri shawls, cotton prints, gold cloth, raw silk, cotton and wool, sheep, cattle, horses, rice, tobacco and saffron. The balance at this time was in Iran's favor, but pilgrims to the shrine cities of Iraq spent up to 10,000 pounds sterling there each year. Despite the sizable figures, many of the items in this trade were actually re-exported to and from Europe. In 1820/21, according to Fraser, Baghdad and the Ottoman Empire took about one-third of Iran's exports. Just after this, from 1821 to 1823, Iran fought a war with the Ottomans, at the Russians' instigation. At issue was the frontier territory of Kurdistan, spilling over into both larger states. Peace was formally concluded in 1847, reaffirming the somewhat vague 1746 borders (and the earlier 1639 ones). After an 1857-65 survey, a temporary boundary treaty was concluded, and the boundary was finally demarcated in October 1914.<sup>155</sup>

The Ottomans naturally benefited from the rise of the Black Sea port of Trabzon in their territory as a terminus for trade with Iran. They participated in shipping from Istanbul to Trabzon, forming a cartel in the 1860s with the Austrians, French and Russians that handled four-fifths of the trade. Iran's trade along this route went into serious deficit, averaging an outflow of 533,000 pounds sterling from 1843 to 1848. Jones's 1873 report from Tabriz ranked Turkey fifth in imports to that city,

<sup>154</sup> On the United States, see "Treaty of Friendship and Commerce: The United States and Persia," December 13, 1856, pp. 158-161 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I; Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 134; Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 291; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137.

<sup>155</sup> On the early nineteenth-century relations of Iran with the Ottomans, see Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 264-65; Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 223 and 236, citing Fraser; Perry, *Karim Khan Zand*, 253; Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 440; "Treaty of Peace (Erzerum): The Ottoman Empire and Persia," May 31, 1847, pp. 90-92 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, I.

at 30,000 pounds sterling annually of "coffee, leather, woolen fabrics (coats and cloaks), drugs and dyes." In Iran's exports from Tabriz however, Turkey, at about 400,000 pounds sterling a year, was second only to Russia, taking "silk, tobacco, shawls, carpets, dyed leather, galls, safflower, tallow, orpiment wax, and dried fruits." A major change occurred in Iran's trade with one part of the Ottoman Empire, Iraq. In the 1860s Iran took two-thirds of Iraq's exports and provided about three-fifths of Baghdad's total imports (worth 11.7 million Turkish piastres in 1869-70). The Suez Canal dramatically re-oriented Iraq's trade toward Europe: by 1877-79 only 5.5 percent of Baghdad's exports went to Iran and Iran's exports had been cut to a quarter of their earlier level. One item that remained important (to Iran's detriment) was the one million pounds sterling or more estimated in 1875 to have been spent by the 100,000 pilgrims from Iran to Iraq each year. In the 1890s the Imperial Ottoman Bank opened branches in Iran, but this did little to stop the gradual decline in the two countries' trade, to about 7 percent in 1900, and the 3-8 percent shown by Table 4.3 for 1914. The decline of Trabzon as a route played a role in this, as may have the high reciprocal 12 percent export duties and 6 on imports (though customs received came to only 2-3 percent). As a final note, Egypt, formerly a part of the Ottoman Empire, figures in Sadrzadeh's list of Iran's trading partners in the early twentieth century, but does not appear in Table 4.3.<sup>156</sup>

Afghanistan—"the Kingdom of Caubul"—was surprisingly Iran's leading trading partner in Malcolm's 1801 report, with 40 lakhs of rupees in exports to Iran (ca. 40,000 pounds sterling), 30 percent of the total trade, and a 10,000 pound sterling positive balance of trade. Imports to Iran consisted of indigo, Kashmir shawls, rhubarb and drugs, exports of European cloths, silk fabrics, wool and precious stones. Relations between the two neighbors were frequently conflictual. In 1813 an Afghan stirred up rebellion in Khurasan, while the several wars of the 1830s to 1850s have already been described. The British consistently interfered to discourage Iran from taking any portion of its

<sup>156</sup> On the later nineteenth-century Ottoman-Iranian relationship, see Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade," 19-20; Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 236 table 1; Jones, "Tabriz," in Issawi, *EHI*, 115; Muhammad Salman Hasan, *Al-tatawwur al-iqtisadi fi al-Iraq* (Beirut, n.d.), extracts translated pp. 120-121 in Issawi, *EHI*; "Iranian Pilgrims in Iraq, 1870s," Thomson to Derby, September 30, 1875, pp. 129-130 in Issawi, *EHI*, 129; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 569; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 268; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 10; Sadrzadeh, *Saderat-i Iran*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 149.

former Afghan domains, and all Qajar claims were formally renounced in the 1857 peace treaty. Later in the century Afghanistan would grow increasingly dependent on Great Britain. Lambton feels that the trade probably declined from 1800 to 1848 due to the wars. Abbott's 1841 report on trade notes a few Afghan traders from Kabul and Qandahar in Tehran, selling shawls and taking European goods. A half century later, Rabino's figures on the trade of Mashhad for 1895 to 1900 show about 3 percent of the city's imports of Afghan provenance (from 6,206 to 26,572 pounds sterling) and about 10 percent of its exports headed there, of which the vast majority were foreign goods in transit. In 1912/13 Khurasan exported 70,000 pounds sterling of goods to Afghanistan and received 100,000 pounds sterling in returns. The trade was of Iranian cotton, wool and silk tissues for Afghan raw materials. Table 4.3 ranks Afghanistan ninth among Iran's trading partners in 1913/14, with less than one percent of total trade.<sup>157</sup>

Trade with Bukhara and Central Asia in 1800 represented 3.75 percent of Iran's foreign trade (more than with the EIC at the time!). Bukhara sent lambskins, cotton thread, rhubarb, worm seed, heron feathers, carpets and gold, rubies and turquoises to Iran. Iran sent fine and coarse fabrics, dyes, painted glass and pearls, amber and coral in return. Malcolm estimated total trade at about 10,000 pounds sterling. In 1820/21 Fraser estimated exports to "Bukhara and the states to the eastward" at 50,000 pounds sterling, so total trade was up some ten times. Abbott's 1841 report mentions few traders from Bukhara and Khiva in Tehran, though some did come with shawls and lambskins to take back English goods which they sold for a high price at home. Blau's estimates of imports from "Tartary, Bukhara, and other lands of Inner Asia" (including, it would seem Afghanistan) in 1858 came to 3 million thalers (428,571 pounds sterling), and exports from Iran to there at 5 million (714,285 pounds sterling). In the 1860s Mashhad was sending carpets, textiles and tea to Central Asia and Afghanistan. Not long afterwards (from the 1860s to the 1880s) Russia occupied the whole area of Central Asia and annexed its congeries of formerly independent khanates to its

<sup>157</sup> On Afghanistan's relations with Iran, see Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 265; Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 444; Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, *passim*, esp. 139; Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 239; Abbott, "Report on Trade for 1841," pp. 118-120 in Issawi, *EHI*, 119-120; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 281 appendix IV; Issawi, *EHI*, 122; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137.

own empire, in some cases, as at Khiva, retaining the ruling dynasty. As Russia built its railroads and to a certain extent commercialized agricultural relations in the region, Iranian Khurasan, which bordered on it, provided labor and agricultural products from its terminus at Mashhad. Iran's traditional (and growing) trade with Central Asia, then, did not disappear in the late nineteenth century so much as it was very advantageously absorbed in the trade of an expanding Russia.<sup>158</sup>

China exported porcelain and tea to Iran, according to Jaubert's 1805 list; Tibet and China sent rhubarb. In 1903 China still provided tea and took much of Iran's opium, up to 180-200,000 pounds sterling worth. Yemen and south Arabia sent coffee and dates in 1805; Iran's exports to Arabia were estimated at 10,000 pounds sterling by Fraser in 1820/21. This is up slightly from the 7,000 pounds sterling in total trade with the Gulf and Red Sea area estimated by Malcolm in 1800. Iranian pilgrims spent 6,000 pounds sterling annually while on pilgrimage to Mecca at that time. Sadrzadeh's list of early twentieth-century trading partners mentions China, Oman, Muscat and Indo-China, none of whom figure in Table 4.3 and thus presumably had rather less than one percent of Iran's total trade in 1914 (though China was a market for Iran's opium carried by the Europeans).<sup>159</sup>

#### I.D. Secular Trends in Iran's Foreign Trade

In looking at the overall trends in the foreign trade we can see growth, certainly, but of a problematic kind. Table 4.4 shows both the aggregate rise in trade and the emergence and deepening of a negative balance of trade. Total trade seems to have doubled from 1800 to 1860, then quadrupled from 1860 to 1914. If prices are adjusted for, the volume of products traded may have risen by three times from 1800 to 1860, and four times from 1860 to 1914, or 12 times in the 114 years. Since

<sup>158</sup> On Iran's relations with Central Asia, see Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 265; Lambton, citing Jaubert's 1805 report and Fraser's 1821 estimate in "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 222, 236; Abbott, "Report on Trade for 1841," in Issawi, *EHI*, 120; Nasser Pakdaman, "Preface," pp. 125-135 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XVI, numbers 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1983), 129; Guity Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform in Iran, 1870-80* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 41, based on Bertold Spuler, "Central Asia: The Last Centuries of Independence," pp. 247-255 in R. C. Bagley, translator and editor, *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey* (Leiden, 1969), part 3; Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 117-144 *passim*.

<sup>159</sup> On China, Tibet and the Arabian peninsula, see Jaubert's 1805 list and Fraser's of 1821 in Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 222, 236; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 137; Malcolm, *The Melville Papers*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 264; Sadrzadeh, *Saderat-i Iran*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 149.

Table 4.4  
Imports, Exports and Balance of Trade, 1800-1913  
(annual averages, in pounds sterling)

Year	Source	Imports	Exports	Total Trade	Balance
1800	Malcolm			2,500,000	negative
1820/21	Fraser		1,225,000		
1830	Brant	2,000,000			
1857	Blau	2,992,857	3,000,000	5,992,857	+7,142
1860	Issawi			5,000,000	
1868	Thomson	2,500,000	1,500,000	4,000,000	-1,000,000
1875-77	Customs returns	2,264,151	2,264,151	4,528,302	even
1877-80	Customs returns	2,264,151	1,509,434	3,773,585	-754,717
1880-85	Customs returns	4,390,244	3,484,321	7,874,565	-905,923
1885-90	Customs returns	4,264,706	2,941,176	7,205,882	-1,323,530
1890-95	Customs returns	3,793,103	2,709,370	6,502,463	-1,083,743
1895-1900	Customs returns	4,965,243	2,482,622	7,447,865	-2,482,621
1901-05	Customs returns	5,872,833	3,913,087	9,785,920	-1,959,746
1906-10	Customs returns	8,052,302	6,561,814	14,614,116	-1,490,488
1911-13	Customs returns	10,727,463	7,890,345	18,617,808	-2,837,118

Sources: For 1800-1868: Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 230-31; Issawi, *EHI*, 130-31; Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 134. For 1877-1913: Bahram Esfandiari Yaganegi, "Recent Financial and Monetary History of Persia," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, Columbia University (1934), 89, converted to pounds sterling and averaged from data in *ibid.*, 61.

Malcolm's figures for 1800 included a large amount of goods in transit both ways, the rise in "real" imports and exports was even larger, perhaps on the order of 15-20 times.<sup>160</sup> Large as the increase was in terms of the internal Iranian economy, it should also be seen in international perspective as on the low side for the region in this period: world trade as a whole grew 50 times from 1800 to 1914, including Egypt at 50-60 times, India (50 times) and Turkey (15-20 times). According to Issawi, "The available figures for Iraq and Syria also show a much higher rate of growth."<sup>161</sup>

A negative trend from any point of view can be seen in Iran's balance of payments. Kept roughly even until mid-century, it burgeoned afterwards. Until the 1850s, Iran's large deficit with India had been covered by surpluses with Russia, Central Asia and the Ottomans. As the European

<sup>160</sup> Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 231; Issawi, *EHI*, 132; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 564, on the increase in "real" trade.

<sup>161</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 70.

trade picked up, this equilibrium collapsed. Thomson's rough estimates show a one million pound sterling gap in 1868, which is confirmed by the customs data for the 1880s and early 1890s. By the turn of the century the deficit surpassed two million pounds, and by 1913 it was running at nearly three million. How was Iran's trade balanced? In 1877, Ross reported, "the gold has disappeared, the silver is fast following, and copper is hard to obtain."<sup>162</sup> As specie became scarce, other "solutions" were found: depreciation of the currency; declarations of bankruptcy by merchants in debt to foreigners; foreign loans, concessions, investments and other expenditures in Iran; and remittances by Iranian workers in Russia.<sup>163</sup> All of these indicated growing dependence of Iran on the West, most had negative consequences.

The composition of Iran's trade also changed dramatically in this period. Tables 4.5A and 4.5B illustrate the shift in trade toward a classic "colonial" pattern by the early twentieth century. The trends in textiles tell much of the story. In 1857 27 percent of Iran's exports consisted of hand-made cotton, wool and silk textiles but by the early twentieth century this had fallen to little more than one percent, replaced on the one hand by a "traditional" manufacture—carpets (12 percent in 1911-13)—and on the other by an increase of raw material exports of silk, wool and especially cotton (26 percent or more in 1911-13). Iran's major exports moved decisively in the direction of raw materials such as rice, dried fruits and nuts, and opium (these were 4 percent in 1857, 32 percent in 1911-13). On the import side the preponderance of two kinds of products is striking: machine-made textiles of all kinds represented 63 percent of imports in the 1850s, and still over 30-40 percent a half century later, while tea and sugar rose from 11 percent to 30 percent of the total. The remaining imports in both eras are largely manufactures—metals, hardware, glassware. Iran's imports in the 1850s were 76 percent manufactures against 32 percent for her exports; in 1904 imports were over 60 percent manufactures but manufactured exports were down under 25 percent (with carpets alone accounting for 10 percent); in 1911-13 imports were more than 73 percent manufactures (counting

<sup>162</sup> Ross is quoted by Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 236.

<sup>163</sup> Robert A. McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency in 19th Century Persia," pp. 36-49 in *Iranian Studies*, volume IV, number 1 (Winter 1971), 44-45; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 550; Issawi, *EHI*, 129.

Table 4.5A  
Composition of Iran's Exports, 1857-1913  
(percent of total exports)

Item	1857	1889	1903	1911-13
Raw silk	31.3	17.5	6.0	5.0
Opium	--	25.6	7.9	7.0
Cereals	{ 10.6	2.7	--	--
Rice		13.4	7.0	12.0
Sheep & horses	8.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Dried fruits	4.0	5.5	12.6	13.0
Tobacco	4.0	5.5	n.a.	1.0
Tea	3.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Drugs & dyes	2.1	3.8	2.4	n.a.
Raw cotton	1.0	6.7	11.2	19.0
Raw wool	n.a.	n.a.	1.9	n.a.
Cotton textiles	11.2	{ 1.0	{ 4.4	{ 1.0
Wool textiles	11.0			
Silk textiles	5.0	0.5		--
Carpets	--	4.0	6.5	12.0
Leather	2.6	n.a.	1.3	n.a.
Hides		n.a.	2.9	n.a.
Metalware	2.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Pearls	n.a.	n.a.	2.3	n.a.
Other	3.4	15.3	33.5	30.0
Total exports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

refined sugar), while Iran's manufactured exports were something over 13 percent, with carpets at 12 percent.

As might be expected, the composition of Iran's trade had a serious impact on its terms of trade, and this too was negative. 'Abbas Chamseddine Kia has estimated that in the late nineteenth century Iran's volume of raw material exports was five times greater than the volume of its imported manufactures, yet the imports cost three times as much.<sup>164</sup> A depreciating currency made Iran's exports cheaper on the international market; this combined with a general drop in world prices for raw materials beginning in the 1870s and lasting a quarter of a century.<sup>165</sup> The price of wheat, for example, fell from \$1.50 a bushel in 1871 to \$0.23 in 1894; for opium, from almost 18 shillings a

<sup>164</sup> A. C. Kia, *Essai sur l'histoire industrielle de l'Iran* (Paris, 1939), 87-88, cited by Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 6.

<sup>165</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 18, 70; McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 39.

Table 4.5B  
Composition of Iran's Imports, 1857-1913  
(percent of total imports)

Item	1857	1889	1903	1911-13
Cotton textiles	41.0	58.4	37.5	30.0
Wool textiles	13.7	{ 14.6	{ 7.3	{ 5.0
Silk textiles	8.5			
Tea	8.6	1.5	4.2	6.0
Drugs & dyes	6.3	1.1	0.6	n.a.
Sugar	2.4	7.3	21.0	24.0
Hardware	9.5	n.a.	n.a.	2.0
Spices	n.a.	7.3	0.9	n.a.
Crude/wrought metals	2.4	1.2	2.8	n.a.
Petroleum	n.a.	1.3	0.8	2.0
Glassware/porcelain	0.8	2.2	1.6	n.a.
Grain	--	--	2.5	4.0
Other	6.8	5.1	20.8	27.0
Total imports	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources (for tables 4.5A and 4.5B): For 1857, Blau, *Commerzielle Zustände Persiens*, analyzed by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 210 table 1; for 1889, Curzon, *Persia and Persian Question*, data from Rey, "Persia in Perspective," 45-46; for 1903, MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," 136; for 1913, see Issawi, *EHI*, 135-36, based on trade returns.

Note: "n.a." means item is probably in the "other" category; "--" means amounts were probably negligible.

pound in 1867-69 to about 8 in 1901-03; for raw silk, from 1 pound sterling per kilogram before 1864 to 0.25 pounds sterling thirty years later.<sup>166</sup> The export "boom" then was in *volume*, rather than *value*, a dubious advantage for the economy. On the import side, the prices for tea and sugar dropped by factors of three and two as well, while textiles fluctuated less, so some of Iran's losses were made good,<sup>167</sup> although on the whole it would seem that the terms of trade deteriorated more for exports than imports, to Iran's ultimate detriment.

<sup>166</sup> For wheat, McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 37; for opium, Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 247 table 8; for silk, Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 349.

<sup>167</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 555 table III.

### I.E. Conclusions: Iran as Periphery in the World-System

The inescapable conclusion to be drawn out of the mass of evidence in this section is the ineluctable rise of foreign control and power vis-a-vis Iran in the latter's relations with other countries. In the terms of world-system theory, Iran moved from the *external arena* of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—and from its own point of view it was part of a non-European *core* at the height of Safavid splendor in the seventeenth—to the *periphery* of the world capitalist system in the course of the nineteenth century. Late Qajar Iran clearly fits Wallerstein's definition of the periphery:

The periphery of a world-economy is that geographical sector of it wherein production is primarily of lower-ranking goods (that is, goods whose labor is less well rewarded) but which is an integral part of the overall system of the division of labor, because the commodities involved are essential for everyday use.<sup>168</sup>

The increasing exchange of Iran's raw materials—opium, cotton, rice, wheat, tobacco, dried fruits, nuts, silk and wool—for Europe's manufactures, and European control of the terms of trade, tariffs, shipping and transport, are all powerful indicators of this new pattern of peripheralization and dependence.

But due to the intensity of Russian-British rivalry in Iran, Iran was a periphery of a particular kind. Unlike those countries and regions that were directly colonized (India, Egypt, much of Africa, southeast Asia and elsewhere), or were formally independent but subject to a single strong outside power (most of Latin America, first to England and then to the United States), Iran was a battleground for two strong imperialisms (comparable to Afghanistan, and in a more complex way, due to the greater number of competitors, to China and the Ottoman Empire). As Bausani notes, "Iran thus had all the disadvantages of being a colony without any of the few advantages, such as the creation of industries either to the direct benefit of the colonizers or for their military purposes, improvements in the juridical system, and so forth."<sup>169</sup> The clearest examples of this are in the lack of infrastructural development, especially the agreements *not* to build railroads, and the "most

<sup>168</sup> Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I*, 301-302.

<sup>169</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 172. See also Halliday, *Iran. Dictatorship and Development*, 33, and Anna Enayat, "The Problem of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century Iran," pp. 48-72 in *RIPEH*, volume II, number 1 (December 1977), 56-57.

favoured nation'' commercial status that had to be won by Russian armies, extending under the overbearing pressure of English force, and eventually granted to most of the industrialized world, to the detriment of Iran's urban handicraft sector. On the positive side, of course, political independence was nominally maintained, but within very circumscribed limits whose contours have been suggested.

Finally, the foregoing conclusions about Iran in the world-system apply equally to the larger issue of Iran's growing dependence. They are not, however, the whole story here, for we must carefully sort out all the effects, negative and positive, which the impact of these new relations worked on Iranian society and its constituent modes of production. Thus we must turn to internal economic developments in the Qajar period.

## **II. Internal Social and Economic Development**

In this section, the procedure adopted in Chapter Two's discussion of Iranian social structure will be followed once again. Beginning with some demographic data, the analysis moves on to the agricultural, urban and tribal sectors, assessing the changes that occurred in each over the period from 1800 to roughly 1914. The section concludes with a look at changes in the modes of production that constituted the Iranian social formation.

### **II.A. Population Growth and Attendant Issues**

Given the state of the available estimates, the demographic picture of Qajar Iran is at first as bewildering as the sheer "guesstimates" looked at in Chapter Two for the seventeenth century. Two tables will help us make our way into (and hopefully through) this thicket. Table 4.6 provides the various estimates made for specific periods, most of them by contemporaries, a few (Bharier, Floor, Issawi) by present-day economic historians. Estimates for the early nineteenth century are far from in agreement, leaving us with anywhere from five to ten million people (roughly the same range as for the seventeenth-century Safavid peak, it should be noted). The difficulties of estimating Iran's sizable tribal population account for much of the variation; it should also be borne in mind that when Georgia and other areas in the Caucasus were lost to Russia in 1813 and 1828, this took as

Table 4.6  
Population Estimates for Select Years, 1800-1914

Year	Estimate (in millions)	Estimator
1800	10	Malcolm
1820	12	Tancoigne
1834	10	Fraser
1884	7.654	Houtum-Schindler
1888	6	Zolotaref
1891	9	Curzon
1900	9.86	Bharier
1909	10	Medvedev
1911	10.66	Floor
1914	10	Issawi

Sources: Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1815), II, 519; Tancoigne and Fraser, cited by Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 78; Houtum-Schindler, Zolotaref (corrected by Issawi to Zolotoliv), and Curzon, in Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, 493-94; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 3; Medvedev, in Issawi, *EHI*, 33; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 3; Issawi, *EHI*, 20 note 2 (extrapolated in a clever way from the 1956 Iranian and 1907 Iranian and Egyptian censuses).

many as one million people out of Iran's population. Table 4.7 presents three syntheses of the data by modern scholars, which though at odds with each other in absolute numbers, suggest something of the patterns at work over the whole period. This table allows us to conclude that Iran's population grew, but not at a uniform rate. There were spurts due to prosperity and peace and setbacks due to famines, epidemics and loss of territories, adding up to a very mixed record of overall improvement, but neither constant nor rapid. Gilbar suggests that annual births ran at 45-50 per thousand and deaths at 40-45 per thousand, for an annual net growth rate of 0.5 percent. Hambly, based on Cipolla's estimate for agrarian societies, feels that Iran's rate was "normal" at 0.5 to 1.0 percent per year.<sup>170</sup> All three estimates from Table 4.7 agree on a steady and sizable increase of two to three million people from roughly 1873 to 1910.

<sup>170</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 178; Gavin Hambly, "An introduction to the economic organization of Qajar Iran," pp. 69-81 in *Iran* (Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies), volume 2 (1964), 70, citing C. Cipolla, *The Economic History of World Population* (London: Penguin Books, 1962), 75-80.

Table 4.7  
Population Estimates over Time, 1800-1914  
(in millions)

Year	Hill	Katouzian	Gilbar
1800		5	
1812	5		
1838	6		
1850			9.0-10
1858	5		
1868	5		9.5-10
1870		6	
1873		8-8.5	
1894	7.5		
1900		8-9	10
1910	8		

Sources: Robert Hill's figures are extrapolated backwards from the 1956 census, adjusted for bad harvests and epidemics, cited by Issawi, "Population and Resources," 162; Homa Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran. Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 1926-1979* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1981), 30 (I have adjusted his 1800 estimates to reflect population in territories later lost in wars to Russia); Gad G. Gilbar, "Demographic developments in late Qājār Persia, 1870-1906," pp. 125-156 in *Asian and African Studies*, volume 11, number 2 (Autumn 1976), 144.

A heavy toll was periodically exacted by epidemics and famines. Small-pox, typhus, plague and cholera came into Iran from foreign pilgrims to Mashhad and Qum, and Iranians returning from Iraq and Mecca. In 1831-32, for example, there was bubonic plague in southern Iran, while in the Caspian region as many as one-third to one-half the population was affected. Plague killed 1,800 out of 8,000 inhabitants at Shushtar in 1876, and broke out again in Gilan the next year. At least 11 outbreaks of cholera were reported in northern Iran from 1835 to 1892. Mortality was estimated at 5 percent of Tabriz's population in 1866; 10,000 people died in Gilan of it in 1892 and 12,000 in Tehran in 1846. Later in the century, epidemics subsided somewhat as quarantine methods improved and medical clinics, often British, were opened.<sup>171</sup> Famines likewise occurred at all too frequent

<sup>171</sup> On these epidemics see Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 139-43; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 556; Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 237; Issawi, *EHI*, 21-22; Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 71 note 55; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 179.

intervals, as for example, in 1860-61, 1869-72, 1880 and in the 1890s and early 1900s. The cataclysm known as the "Great Famine" of 1869-72 caused anywhere from 500,000 to 1,500,000 deaths in a total population of not more than nine or ten million.<sup>172</sup> Though later famines were less severe, they continued to take a toll.

One further demographic trend can be noted here, to be explored in more detail in discussing each of the economic sectors later on. Table 4.8 offers the again somewhat bewildering variety of available estimates as to the proportion of the population engaged in each of the major economic activities.

Table 4.8  
Population of Iran, by Sector, 1800-1913  
(percent of total population)

Year	Urban	Nomadic/Tribal	Agricultural	Estimator
1800	10	50	40	Nowshirvani
1800		50		Malcolm
1800-25	10	25	65	Helfgott
1850s	8-9	33	55-60	Gilbar
1850s		50		Sheil
1868	22	39	39	Thomson
1884	26	25	49	Houtum-Schindler
1888	25	25	50	Zolotaref
1891	25	25	50	Curzon
1900	20	25	55	Ivanov
1900	20	25	55	Nowshirvani
1909	25	25	50	Medvedev
1913	25	25	50	Sobotsinskii

Sources: Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 563; Malcolm, letter of April 10, 1801, cited by Hambly, "An Introduction to the Economic Organization," 70; Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 85-86; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 180-81; Sheil is cited by Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 61; Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 28; Houtum-Schindler, Zolotaref (Zolotoliv) and Curzon, in Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, 493-94; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 9; Medvedev, cited in Issawi, *EHI*, 33; Sobotsinskii, *Persiya*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 33.

<sup>172</sup> On these famines see Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 143; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 208; Issawi, *EHI*, 22; Hassan Hakimian, "Wage Labor and Migration: Persian Workers in Southern Russia, 1880-1914," pp. 443-462 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 17, number 4 (November 1985), 453.

Several problems are posed by this data. Most importantly, "tribal" refers to a larger group than "nomadic," for it includes settled tribespeople engaged in agricultural pursuits. Naturally, if an estimate is for the total tribal population (as in Sheil's and Thomson's figures), this inflates the pastoral nomadic sector and deflates the agricultural sector. Secondly, definitions of a city range from above 10,000 inhabitants (in most cases), to as low as 3,000 (in Helfgott's estimate); likewise agricultural "villages" of as high as 10,000 people have been reported (as in Sobotsinskii's 1913 estimate). Taking note of these problems, and the difficulties of estimation in population matters generally, it can still be concluded that the proportion of people living in cities probably doubled between 1800 and 1914, while the proportion of nomadic pastoralists would seem to have fallen from *perhaps* as high as 50 percent in 1800 to 33 percent by 1850 and to 25 percent by 1914. The sedentary agricultural sector appears to have roughly held its own as a simple proportion of the population. The reasons for these shifts, and the absolute numbers in each sector, will be clarified in the sections that follow.

## II.B. The Agricultural Sector

The topics to be covered in this section include the numbers of people involved in agriculture, analyses of the specific crops produced in Iran (which shows the beginnings of a transition from subsistence to cash crop farming), land tenure issues (the state, landlords and merchants in the agrarian sector), the matters of taxes, rent and sharecropping, the situation of the peasantry, and such clues as to the attitudes and consciousness of the agrarian classes as can be found. The general movement of analysis is thus from demographics to production to the possessing class, division of the surplus, the base producers, and finally, to issues of class consciousness.

**The agricultural population.** Of 3.9 million economically active males in 1910, 3.5 million (89.72 percent) are characterized by Floor as involved in "agriculture."<sup>173</sup> Though this number includes pastoral producers and excludes the numerous female workers who were active in this

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<sup>173</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 4.

sector, it does indicate the central importance of the agrarian sector to the economy. Table 4.8 suggests that 50 to 60 percent of Iran's population was occupied in sedentary agricultural pursuits between 1850 and 1914, and thus the sector as a whole accounted for five to six million of Iran's ten million people in 1914.

**Specific crops.** Iran's major crops in the Qajar period were grains, silk, opium, cotton, dried fruits and nuts, rice and tobacco, while tea, olives, sugar-cane, saffron and a few others were also grown.<sup>174</sup> The major subsistence crop, as it had been since before Safavid times, was wheat (along with other cereals such as barley). In the mid-nineteenth century, domestic production met all of Iran's internal needs and allowed wheat and barley to stand second in Blau's 1858 list of Iran's agricultural exports at about 10 percent of the total exports of the country.<sup>175</sup> Wheat and barley were exported from Khurasan, Fars and Kermanshah. In the north, Russian grain speculators distributed free seed in return for the right to buy the crop at market rates during the harvest (when prices were lowest), while in the south grain played a key role in Iran's trade in the Gulf and with India.<sup>176</sup> The 1869-72 famine has been blamed on the switch from cereals to cash crops such as opium in the south, and while this undoubtedly played a role, the eightfold increase in wheat exports from Bushire between 1869 and 1894 from 55,295 to 450,000 bushels should not be overlooked. Moreover, due to the depreciation of Iran's currency and the fall in the price of wheat on the world market from \$1.50 a bushel in 1871 to \$.23 in 1894, this brought in only the same revenue, despite the vastly increased volume of exports.<sup>177</sup> Exports were still going to India, Russia, the Ottoman empire and even England in 1892; in 1893-94 the government put an embargo on wheat exports, but these seem to have continued illegally despite the fact that as the British consul in Khurasan noted in 1894, "In an ordinary year the export of corn means semi-starvation to three-parts [*sic*] of the population."<sup>178</sup>

<sup>174</sup> For a comprehensive list of the crops grown in each province around 1900, see Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 274-77.

<sup>175</sup> Gad G. Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture in the Late Qājār Period, 1860-1906: Some Economic and Social Aspects," pp. 312-365 in *Asian and African Studies*, volume 12, number 3 (1978), 315; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 186.

<sup>176</sup> McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 41; Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 173.

<sup>177</sup> Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xviii, on the shift away from wheat production; McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 37, 39, 46-47 note 2 on prices and volume.

Scarcity due to underproduction and over-exporting led to increased prices for wheat domestically, further hurting the consumer (though one wonders if this benefited wheat growers).<sup>179</sup> Iran's self-sufficiency in the production of this basic staple food was gradually undermined, so that by the early 1900s exports of wheat were less than imports of wheat flour, although given population growth, the decline in production may not have been absolute.<sup>180</sup> For the first time (except in earlier periods of drought), Iran was a net importer of wheat.

By 1850, the second crop in the country's gross domestic product was silk, and even more significantly, raw silk was Iran's single largest export item, accounting for 31 to 38 percent of the total. Production was centered on Gilan, but silk also came from Mazandaran, Khurasan, Azerbaijan and Yazd. Silk output doubled between the 1840s and 1860s, and reached a peak in 1864, when Gilan produced about two million pounds of silk, worth 1.1 million pounds sterling.<sup>181</sup> The crop was decimated in the 1860s however by the silkworm disease known as muscardine or *pébrine*, which caused the death of most of the silkworm's eggs. Starting in the Rhône valley in 1856, it spread to Italy, Spain and Greece; it is said to have been brought to Iran by Italian silk merchants in 1858 who carried a small quantity of diseased eggs with them for sale in Gilan (at the same time they were supposedly in Iran to buy disease-free eggs).<sup>182</sup> Another explanation is that the disease was "the result of unlimited expansion without change of technique."<sup>183</sup> Table 4.9 documents the disastrous collapse of the 1860s, and the modest recovery later in the century. From the peak year of 1864, production and value fell by a factor of ten through 1877, before picking up again in the 1880s and 1890s. The seeming recovery of volume in 1897 is deceptive, since most of that year's production was in cocoons, and eight such pounds were equal to one pound of spun silk. Moreover, prices

<sup>178</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 211; McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 46-47 note 2; Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 238-39, cites the British consul in 1894. An earlier embargo at Bushire in 1875 had been successfully opposed by the British: Issawi, *EHI*, 76.

<sup>179</sup> On prices see Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 239; McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 30-31.

<sup>180</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 211.

<sup>181</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 187; Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 346; Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xvii; Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 63.

<sup>182</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 347-48.

<sup>183</sup> Inalcik and Steensgaard, "Ḥarīr," 211.

**Table 4.9**  
**Volume, Price and Value of Gilan's Silk, 1812-1902**

Year	Volume (in lbs.)	Price (in pounds sterling per mann-i tabriz)	Value (in pounds sterling)
1812	600,000	3.6	332,308
1842	1,200,000	3.1	570,000
1857	1,375,000	3.3	698,965
1858	1,250,000	3.3	635,423
1864	2,168,350	4.4	1,466,405
1865	1,235,908	4.4	835,816
1866	525,228	5.4	436,004
1870	234,020	4.7	167,713
1877	210,000	2.8	89,670
1886	390,000	2.2	132,600
1897	1,001,520	1.5	229,348
1902	n.a.	n.a.	255,964

Source: Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 60-61, 62, 63, 64; calculation of value, mine.

for Iran's silk fell by 400 percent on the world market as the use of Japanese eggs reduced quality and the entry of Japan itself onto the world silk markets as a large volume producer cut prices further.<sup>184</sup> Two other negative trends were the entry of foreign firms such as Ralli Brothers and Pascaldi Brothers (as well as local merchants) into the domestic raw silk market after the mid-1860s, and a fourfold drop in the Gilan labor force in this sector, from an estimated 148-296,000 workers in 1864 to only 38-76,000 by 1902.<sup>185</sup>

About the same time that silk production was collapsing in the north, opium began a meteoric rise as a southern export. Starting as an *import* in 1800, opium came to be grown in the Isfahan and Yazd areas, and to a lesser extent in Fars, Khurasan, Kirman, Kirmanshah and Khuzistan. Until the 1850s it was mostly consumed domestically, but output rose sharply in the 1860s and 1870s until it became Iran's leading export at 26 percent of the total, and a value of up to 600-800,000 pounds sterling in the early 1880s, with markets mainly in China and London.<sup>186</sup> Table 4.10 shows the rapid

<sup>184</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 349.

<sup>185</sup> Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 53, 58-59.

<sup>186</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 325; Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 242-45; Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 60.

rise in output through 1880-82, followed by a plateau of 600-800,000 lbs. until 1903.

Table 4.10  
Volume, Price and Value of Iran's Opium, 1862-1906

Years	Average Annual Quantity (in lbs.)	Price Index (1867-69 = 100)	Value (in pounds sterling)
1862-65	103,333	76	70,000
1867-69	268,200	100	238,400
1871-73	192,150	67	113,867
1874-76	292,050	72	187,933
1877-79	752,850	83	557,667
1880-82	874,710	79	618,022
1883-85	682,785	50	304,396
1886-88	594,990	60	320,425
1889-91	835,065	59	435,096
1892-94	529,605	55	261,082
1895-97	556,965	51	251,443
1898-1900	732,314	57	366,014
1901-03	724,127	45	293,133
1904-06	378,625	57	190,607

Source: Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 246 table 7 and 247 table 8.

In terms of the value of the crop the period 1880-1902 saw a more serious decline, as the terms of trade inexorably worsened (Gilbar offers some alternative figures showing a rise in value from 542,887 pounds sterling a year in the late 1880s to 750,000 pounds sterling a year in the late 1890s—I see no way to reconcile these data sets unless different prices are being used).<sup>187</sup> In general, Iran had no control over the terms of trade as competing supplies from Bengal and Japan could lower prices, as did any lessening of demand in the markets of China, South Africa and England. When these factors came together with problems in Iran's output due to droughts, overcultivation, adulteration and unfavorable tariffs after 1900, an irreversible decline in exports set in, from Gilbar's estimated 13,000 chests of opium in the late 1890s to 1,690 in 1905-6.<sup>188</sup> Thus opium, like silk, exhibited a boom and bust pattern, and shows the hazards and vicissitudes of reliance upon a single major crop. While McDaniel observes that "The peasant who grew opium did better all around than

<sup>187</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 329-30.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 331-33; Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 241, 246-48; Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 418 note 36.

those who stuck to wheat," and Gilbar argues that all classes involved in its production—from agricultural laborers to sharecroppers, peasant proprietors, landlords and merchants—could profit from it, it seems nevertheless clear that the bulk of the profits accrued to merchants, while subsistence farmers were increasingly drawn into a cash economy that exposed them to indebtedness at the hands of moneylenders, landlords and tax collectors.<sup>189</sup> Added to this was the more general threat to the population of higher prices and famines as wheat acreage was reduced, as well as the addiction of growing numbers of Iranians in both city and countryside.<sup>190</sup>

In the wake of the silk collapse, the north's new export crops were cotton, rice and dried fruits. Though cotton had been produced and consumed locally for two millenia, in the 1840s it wasn't listed among Trabzon's exports and in 1857 only 100 bales left that port. Cotton prices jumped fourfold during the Civil War "cotton famine" and Iran's exports responded with a fivefold increase, then promptly declined again after 1865. But Russia had already been a market in 1855, and production expanded considerably in the 1870s and 1880s so that by 1900 "cotton was Iran's single most important raw material exported."<sup>191</sup> Table 4.11 documents this increase.

Table 4.11  
Export of Cotton to Russia, 1870-1914

Year	Amount Exported (in tons)
1870	27
1873	3,039
early 1890s	9,475
ca. 1900	12,700
1913/14	24,500

Source: Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 355.

The value of these exports rose from 848,700 rubles in 1877 to 7,501,000 a year between 1906 and

<sup>189</sup> McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 37; Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 337, 339, 346; Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 187-88.

<sup>190</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 238, quoting the British consul at Bushire; Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 244, citing an 1893 report by Consul Thomson; Nikki Keddie, "The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914, and its Political Impact," pp. 119-136 in her *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1980), 128.

<sup>191</sup> Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 233-34; Issawi, *EHI*, 245; Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 237; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 573.

1909, and doubled again by 1914 to 1,500,000 pounds sterling.<sup>192</sup> The main region of cultivation was Khurasan, but other sources of cotton included eastern Mazandaran, Azerbaijan, Isfahan, Yazd, Kashan, Qum and Kirman.<sup>193</sup> Russian commercial speculators would give free seed to landlords and peasants, accompanied by cash advances at New Year's (March 21). Peasants lost by this arrangement because prices were lowest at harvest time when the crop was sold, and the landlord often took 20 percent for the seed supplied to him at no cost by the Russians. Again, as grain cultivation declined, the peasants often became indebted the next winter when there was no wheat left and their debts were due. Thus Gilbar's conclusion that the "income derived from [cotton] was one of the major factors for the economic prosperity of Khurāsān in the 1890s and 1900s," must be seen in the differential perspective of gains for landlords, merchants and the Russians, and hardship for the peasantry.<sup>194</sup>

In the case of rice, the market was again Russia (Turkestan). Back in 1853 there was a temporary ban on rice exports from Tabriz. As the silkworm disease spread, the peasants of Gilan found rice easier to grow, and of use as a subsistence as well as a cash crop. Production of rice in Gilan grew from 79 million kilograms in 1865 to 177 million in 1872; in 1913 it was 188 million. The fact that exports doubled from 1891 to 1913 to become 14 percent of Iran's exports to Russia suggests that local consumption must have declined. Nor, due to the diseconomies of transport, did much of the "surplus" go to the south of Iran, which had to import rice from India and Burma.<sup>195</sup>

The market for Iran's dried fruits was also in Russia. Blau puts this product's share of the export trade at 4.1 percent in 1857; from 1900 to 1905 it constituted 15.4 percent of a much larger volume of exports. Russia took 80-90 percent of this item, in amounts that rose steadily from 1 million rubles in 1870 to 5.9 million in 1900 and 10.6 million (about one million pounds sterling) in 1913. The producing areas were in Azerbaijan (where it picked up the deficit from silk), Khurasan,

<sup>192</sup> Ter-Gukasov, *Politicheskie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 146; Issawi, *EHI*, 246; there are also figures for 1900-1908 in Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 356.

<sup>193</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 355.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*; McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 42-43; Issawi, *EHI*, 209.

<sup>195</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 76; Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 320-23; Entner, *Russo-Persian Commercial Relations*, 75.

Kurdistan and elsewhere. McDaniel notes, interestingly, that the export of dried fruits remained "largely in native hands."<sup>196</sup>

One item that required a social movement (the Tobacco Rebellion—see Chapter Five) to remain in Iranian hands was tobacco. Cultivated in Isfahan, Shiraz, Kashan, Yazd, Urumiya, Iraq-i 'Ajam and Kurdistan, it was the second cash crop of Iran (after silk) in the mid-nineteenth century, though it accounted for only 4-5 percent of total exports at that time. Unlike cotton, rice and dried fruits, it had several markets—Iraq, Egypt, Russia, India and the Arabian peninsula. Its chief market in the Ottoman Empire however placed a tariff on it in the 1880s, slowing its cultivation and export in Iran. Scattered estimates for total production include Blau's 22,700 tons in the late 1850s, Curzon's 52,230 tons in the late 1880s and the Tobacco Régie's low 19,564 tons in the troubled year of 1891. After the Tobacco Rebellion prices declined by 30 percent between 1891 and 1894. Exports seem to have as well (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12  
Export of Tobacco, 1850s-1907

Year	Tons Exported
late 1850s	9,988
mid-1880s	4-5,000
1892	2,500
1906/7	1,820

Source: Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 357.

*Habl al-Matin* newspaper claimed in 1906 that exports of Isfahan tobacco had fallen from 300,000 bags to 5,000, now in foreign hands. By comparing export estimates with the sketchy production totals, we may perhaps infer that the product was consumed mostly internally, and was primarily in the hands of local merchants, rather than that total cultivation fell.<sup>197</sup>

<sup>196</sup> McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 37; Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 355-56; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 188, for Blau's 1858 figures.

<sup>197</sup> Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xviii; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 187; Issawi, *EHI*, 108-9; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 574; Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 181; Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 60; Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 356-57 for estimates of total production; M. L. Tomara, *Ekonomicheskoe Polozhenie Persii* (Saint Petersburg, 1895), extracts translated pp. 249-252 in Issawi, *EHI*, 250, for prices; *Habl al-Matin*, May 18, 1906, in Issawi, *EHI*, 68.

A number of other crops are mentioned by various sources. Olives and sugar cane were tried as substitutes for silk in the Caspian area. There was an "olive industry" at Rasht. Mazandaran and Khurasan produced some sugar cane, which was sent in raw form to Russia as early as 1849. And though tea was grown in the Caspian provinces as well, both tea and sugar were major imports into Iran. An 1891 report from Mashhad notes a shift from cotton to saffron cultivation in Turbat-i Haidari, as the rare condiment was very valuable. Finally, though little mention is made of vegetable gardening, this must have been practised to a very considerable degree, both for local subsistence and in lucrative market gardens outside and around the cities.<sup>198</sup>

Taking all these crops together, a rough estimate of the total agricultural GDP around 1860 may be 19-20 million pounds sterling.<sup>199</sup> Gilbar concludes that the whole period from 1865 to 1906 saw "fairly rapid growth in the agricultural sector.... there was a substantial increase in real terms in the *per caput* agricultural output."<sup>200</sup> I doubt this was so clearcut, given the two major shocks that were suffered with the collapse of silk in 1864 and the drought and great famine of 1869-72; the large population increase of 1870-1914 raises doubts about any real per capita gain overall as well. The 1870s to 1900 also witnessed a shift toward cash crops for export, such that, in Nowshirvani's view, by 1900-1910 "we can no longer characterize Iranian agriculture as subsistence farming. By then it was well integrated into the national economy, and commercial relations were widespread."<sup>201</sup> He himself notes that "Many features of subsistence farming persisted," and Issawi that cash agriculture was less extensive in Iran than elsewhere in the Middle East.<sup>202</sup> But even more important than its extent was its pervasive negative side. Among the crops we have just examined, we saw the collapse of silk, upon which the economy was quite dependent in mid-century; its replacement by opium, which went into serious decline by 1905; that cotton benefited merchants,

<sup>198</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 350; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 274-77; Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 241; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 574.

<sup>199</sup> This is my own rough estimate based on Gilbar's observation that Gilan's 216,000 pounds sterling in taxes represented 11 percent of the total state revenue. Since the land tax was roughly ten percent of the crops' market value, total agricultural GDP was (very) roughly  $216,000 \times 9 \times 10 = 19,440,000$  pounds sterling: Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 350.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>201</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 579.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*; Issawi, *EHI*, 17.

landlords and the Russians more than peasants; and that rice exports grew at the expense of internal consumption. Wheat suffered a decline as cash crops became more popular and intruded on it, so that by 1914 it was in net deficit, casting doubts on whether subsistence farming kept up with population. The subsistence sector in general showed no substantial gains in productivity or technique, and irrigation systems, the most crucial infrastructure, deteriorated.<sup>203</sup> The shift to cash crops played a role in compounding the hardship of drought years, in an economy where there had been minimal surplus food production to begin with. Seyf in fact discerns a pattern of "constant disequilibrium": growing too many cash crops led to threat of famine, causing cutbacks in export crops; then more subsistence crops led to price falls and a shift to export crops once again, and another possibility of famine. Thus the terrible famine of 1869-72 was followed by the shift to cash crops in the 1870s, another food shortage at Bushire in 1887, then more cash cropping, and another reduction in cotton in the Gulf in 1893-94.<sup>204</sup> From this it emerges that both subsistence and cash crops had their limits, and limited each other. To further nuance this argument, we must examine patterns of land tenure, the constituent agrarian classes and their relations.

**Land tenure, landlords.** As the Qajars took over land revenue administration in 1800 the basic change since Safavid times had been the encroachment of state-owned crown land (*khaliseh*) and *tiyuls* (state-granted land revenues) at the expense of *vaqf* (religiously endowed) properties. We saw that this occurred in the eighteenth century due to invasions, changes of dynasty, civil wars and the anti-ulama policies of the Afghans and Nadir Shah. The early Qajars continued to grant *tiyuls* due to their short-term revenue problems and the need to raise armies. In 1840 Rawlinson estimated that "about a fifth of the whole land revenue of Persia is at present thus alienated from the crown."<sup>205</sup> At the same time the state increased its direct hold on crown lands through confiscation for rebellions and tax arrears, earlier claims and windfalls. In 1807 Waring said that one-eighth of Fars and Persian Iraq was held by the shah, while Muhammad Shah (1834-48) acquired land around

<sup>203</sup> Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 234, 248.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 238-40.

<sup>205</sup> H. C. Rawlinson, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz," pp. 1-64 in *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, volume X (1841), 5, cited by Minorsky, "Tiyul," 800.

Isfahan which had been ruined during famine years.<sup>206</sup> This partial shift in tenure back toward the state was reinforced during the premiership of Hajji Mirza Aqasi from 1835 to 1848, responding to fiscal crisis:

His policy of land dispossession (*ghaṣb*) which, in less than fourteen years, brought considerable *tuyūl* and private land under direct crown control, was designed not only to finance the state expenditure and pay for Muḥammad Shāh's military campaigns, but also to diminish the threat presented by the land-owning notables [*sic*] control of the grain supply to the capital and other provincial cities. By advocating that "the principal in the matter of assuming possession (*mutiṣarrifāt*) is based on dispossession (*ghaṣb*) unless the assumed possessor (*mutiṣarrif*) could prove his righteous possession," he reclaimed from the *tuyūldārs* large numbers of villages, mostly in the fertile areas around the capital, but also in Azarbaijan, Khurasan and other provinces. Towards the end of his premiership in one transaction alone he transferred to Muhammad Shah the ownership of no less than 1438 villages which had previously come under his private control. Their total value was more than one million *tūman*. No wonder that Mīrzā Navvāb Tehrānī refers to him with the cynical title of *Hādīm al-Anjāb* (the eliminator of the notables).<sup>207</sup>

The short-lived reforming prime minister Amir Kabir (governed 1848-51) continued to strengthen central control by revamping the *tiyul* system so that the grantee was no longer to accompany his stipulated military contingents, but merely to send them to the designated encampment, a move intended to make the army units less loyal to the grantees and more so to the government. In 1861 Eastwick estimated crown land at one-third to one-half of the total cultivated area of Iran.<sup>208</sup> Though Lambton confirms that its extent at mid-century was considerable, "it was for the most part in a state of decay and made little contribution to the revenue."<sup>209</sup>

This set the stage for a mighty swing of the pendulum back to the privatization of land holdings in the second half of the century. F. Mochaver noted in 1938 that although "We are not able to report and explain the meaning and modality of this evolution, what is certain is that under the Qajars land was undeniably the object of all sorts of alienations and conditional transferrals."<sup>210</sup> Lambton and Minorsky, two of the great authorities on land tenure in Iranian history, concur, the

<sup>206</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 148.

<sup>207</sup> Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xxi-xxii. A somewhat different view of this last transaction is that the shah had to confiscate these more than one thousand villages from Hajji Mirza Aqasi, after his dismissal from office: Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 587 note 44.

<sup>208</sup> Eastwick is cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 189.

<sup>209</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 152.

<sup>210</sup> F. Mochaver, *L'évolution des Finances Iraniennes* (Paris, 1938), 149, cited in French by Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-mulūk*, 196 note 1, translation mine.

former observing,

As the control of the central government weakened, so the tendency grew to convert *tuyûls* into *de facto* private property, inheritable and alienable by sale. The ranks of the landowners proper thus came to be swelled by erstwhile or actual government officials and *tuyûldârs*.<sup>211</sup>

and the latter that "The *tiyûl* often led to the transformation of its holder into a landed proprietor."<sup>212</sup> Pavlovitch, writing in 1910, suggested that sometime after 1850, and certainly by 1880, land ownership passed increasingly out of the hands of the crown and *tiyul*-holders into the hands of merchants, ulama and officials.<sup>213</sup> Though dating this process is hazardous, one can point to the sale of crown lands around Tehran in 1878-79 and in the 1880s a decree of Nasir al-Din Shah to sell all crown land except what remained in the Tehran area: "In the space of ten years much was sold."<sup>214</sup> The British consul at Isfahan reported in 1899 that "rich nobles and the Ulema" had bought up much crown land.<sup>215</sup> Crown land in Azerbaijan and several other localities had almost completely disappeared, according to Minorsky.<sup>216</sup>

The result of these somewhat obscure processes was the rise of a new, more stable class of landowners (*mulkdar*), whose holdings were not just private, but large:

... in the course of time the functions of provincial governor, the provincial military commander, the tax collector, the tax farmer, and the man to whom the land assignment was made tended to be combined in one person. This led to the emergence of large landed properties virtually independent of the central government.<sup>217</sup>

Bureaucrats and urban notables, provincial governors and tribal chiefs all came to acquire such large-scale holdings, which normally started as theoretically revocable *tiyuls*. The ambiguities of the land revenue system allowed the "temporary" holder to become *de facto* permanent if he was powerful enough, or in a remote or troubled area.<sup>218</sup> The least secure but perhaps wealthiest of these

<sup>211</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 139.

<sup>212</sup> Minorsky, "Tiyûl," 801.

<sup>213</sup> Michel Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire en Perse à la veille de la révolution," pp. 616-625 in *Revue du Monde Musulman*, volume XII, number 12 (December 1910), 618.

<sup>214</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 152.

<sup>215</sup> Cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 210.

<sup>216</sup> Minorsky, "Tiyûl," 801.

<sup>217</sup> Ann K. S. Lambton, "Rural Development and Land Reform in Iran," pp. 52-54 in Issawi, *EHI*, 53.

<sup>218</sup> Ann K. S. Lambton, "The Case of Hājji Nūr al-Dīn, 1823-47: A Study in Land Tenure," pp. 54-72 in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, volume XXX, part 1 (1967), 71-72.

overlapping groups were the provincial governors, whose position was in fact often changed, but who might secure some part of their extensive jurisdictions permanently. Bureaucrats and urban officials often became men of property. Numerous example of tribal khans owning agricultural lands exist—the Bigirlu are said to have owned “a third of the hamlets and a fifth of the gardens of Qumm”; the Turkomans held Mala’ir and the villages of the Qara Su river; the Mukri Kurds controlled the Sauj Bulagh area in a complex tenure arrangement; the Moqaddam and other families of tribal origin held land in the environs of Maragheh.<sup>219</sup>

A second major constituent element of the new landed class was urban merchants investing in agricultural property, a trend which increased after the 1870s when the boom in export crops coincided with state sales of the crown lands.<sup>220</sup> They also acquired estates by making loans to bureaucrats, governors and other notables in need of cash who had to put up their land as collateral.<sup>221</sup> In the south, many *tiyuls* passed from the longstanding local elites (often tribal *shaykhs*) to merchants. An example of this was the replacement of the *shaykh* of Bushire in 1852 by the family of the Qavam al-mulk of Shiraz, a wealthy trader descended from Hajji Ibrahim, the Zand/Qajar *kalantar* and minister.<sup>222</sup> Lambton’s case study of Hajji Nur al-Din, a British Indian merchant, shows that foreign merchants also could become landowners, at least before an 1854 land tenure decree.<sup>223</sup> Other examples are provided by Good for the Maragheh area, and Gilbar, who notes a major sale of crown lands in 1901-2 to Hajji Aqa Muhammad Mu’in al-Tujjar Bushihri, involving the Shulistan crown lands north of Kazirun, populated by Mamasani tribespeople and producing excellent opium.<sup>224</sup> All of these examples definitively confirm the privatization trend in land tenure.

How did such large, private landowners deal with their estates? First, it is worth noting that the largest among them owned many villages. Good found that most of the elite landed families of

<sup>219</sup> Lambton, *Lord and Peasant*, 142-43, 156; Lambton, “Persian Society under the Qājars,” 130-31; Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, “Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran: The Case of Qajar Maragheh,” pp. 129-163 in *Iranian Studies*, volume X, number 3 (Summer 1977), 133, 149.

<sup>220</sup> Amanat, “Introduction” to *Cities and Trade*, xx; Floor, “The Merchants (*tujjār*),” 113-14.

<sup>221</sup> Mehraei, “Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States,” 80-82; Nowshirvani, “The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture,” 578.

<sup>222</sup> Olson, “Persian Gulf Trade,” 182-83.

<sup>223</sup> Lambton, “The Case of Hajji Nur al-Din,” 54 ff, 67.

<sup>224</sup> Good, “Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran,” 149; Gilbar, “Persian Agriculture,” 340.

Maragheh owned over 20, and several over 60, villages.<sup>225</sup> Thus, particularly for the bureaucrats and merchants among them, most lived not on their properties, but in cities as absentee landlords.<sup>226</sup> These landlords appointed overseers (*mubashirs*) who wielded great authority in setting the tax rate, collecting taxes, fining, punishing and even imprisoning peasants.<sup>227</sup> Only in a minority of cases did landlords reside at or close enough to their estates to directly supervise agriculture. One such example appears in Rawlinson's 1841 account of Malik Kasim Mirza, a son of Fath 'Ali Shah, in Azerbaijan, which speaks of the prince's innovations and experiments.<sup>228</sup> Another was Mustafa Khan, the son of the Qajar foreign minister, who left behind a document in 1877 that indicates an intimate knowledge of procedures in a village he rented (and thus did not own) from the shrine of Mashhad, which he inspected and supervised himself. He felt he had to know this or he would be taken advantage of.<sup>229</sup> Absentee or not, late Qajar period landowners appear to have exercised considerable legal and quasi-legal control on their domains. Landed power was enhanced by keeping a body of armed retainers, made possible by possession of land, and in turn increasing one's power, prestige and sometimes holdings.<sup>230</sup> Mustafa Khan, for example, settled village disputes and also mediated any complaints the peasants had with the government (one imagines this conflict of interest operated in his favor).<sup>231</sup> The 1901-2 farman transferring crown lands to Hajji Aqa Muhammad Mu'in al-Tujjar Bushihri gave him the "right of *'haute et basse justice'*" over the lands and tribes purchased by him."<sup>232</sup> Pavlovitch's survey of agrarian relations in 1910 says that peasant families had to give their daughters to the landowner for three months a year in *sighe* (temporary marriage, according to Shi'a Islamic law, if entered into freely).<sup>233</sup> One may ask how widespread such a practice was, but the scope of landlord power was clearly greater than it had been in earlier times.

<sup>225</sup> Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 149.

<sup>226</sup> Lambton lists some examples of absentee owners: *Landlord and Peasant*, 173.

<sup>227</sup> Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire," 620.

<sup>228</sup> Rawlinson, "Notes on a Journey to Tabriz," 5-7, cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 194-95.

<sup>229</sup> J. D. Gurney, "A Qajar Household and Its Estates," pp. 137-176 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XVI, numbers 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1983), 143.

<sup>230</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 140; Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 146.

<sup>231</sup> Gurney, "A Qajar Household," 142.

<sup>232</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 340, quoting the Government of India's 1910 *Gazeteer of Persia*.

<sup>233</sup> Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire," 621.

Other forms of land tenure certainly continued to exist in Qajar Iran. There were, for example, smaller landlords and small-holding peasants. The origins of the former category lay in the fact that "Some moneylenders, village headmen, and prosperous peasants also succeeded in becoming landlords after their wealth increased."<sup>234</sup> Evidence of peasant-held villages exists, as well as peasant small-holders mixed in with peasant tenants.<sup>235</sup> Minorsky however suggests the limited room for maneuver of such groups:

In the rare cases where the peasants were the proprietors of the soil (*khurda-mālik*) the impossibility of resisting stronger neighbors or the oppression of government agents often forced them to seek out a powerful *tiyūldār*, who would grant them his protection, but very often this protection ended in the disappearance of their rights as small owners.<sup>236</sup>

Religiously endowed *vaqf* land likewise continued as a type of land tenure, quite probably more extensive than that of small-holders. The shrine land rented by Mustafa Khan was *vaqf*, and it was common practice for it to be rented out to "landlords" or directly to peasants. Though technically such land was inalienable, it was sometimes in fact acquired and appropriated by private owners, especially in late Qajar times.<sup>237</sup> Pavlovitch relates the instance of a huge *vaqf* property called Zachrié, bigger than "the kingdom of Saxony," controlled by the *ulama* for 200 years, but which had passed into private hands; of 380 villages only 12-15 continued as *vaqf*.<sup>238</sup> As Lambton notes, "It is difficult to estimate the relative extent of the land granted as *tuyūl* or of the different forms of landholding," but her data on several areas tends to confirm the growth of large private property and the relative scarcity of crown lands, small holders and *vaqfs*. In Zanjan in 1878-79, for example, out of 800-900 villages, *arbabi* (private landlord-held) land was most common, followed by small holders (though it is not clear if these were genuine peasant proprietors). Next came *tiyuls*, and *vaqfs* were few in number, although "Notable also is the number of villages which appear to have belonged to members of the religious classes." In Kharaghan, 1880-81, of 34 villages there was very

<sup>234</sup> Nikki R. Keddie (with the research help of Wells H. Keddie) *Historical Obstacles to Agrarian Change in Iran*, Claremont Asian Studies, number 8 (Claremont, California: September 1960), 7.

<sup>235</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 192; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 577.

<sup>236</sup> Minorsky, "Tiyūl," 801.

<sup>237</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 155.

<sup>238</sup> Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire," 621.

little crown or *vaqf* land, and although 11 villages of the total seem to have been partly or wholly held by small-owners, six of these are recorded as having been purchased by tribal khans or Nasir al-Mulk, a government minister. In Mala'ir in 1879-80, 206 of 236 villages were wholly *arbabi* (and 7 more partially), 16 were crown land (and 5 more partially) and only 2 were *vaqf*, with no mention of small holders. In Nihavand and Khazal, only 13 of 78 villages were crown land.<sup>239</sup>

Much having to do with land tenure in Qajar Iran was fraught with uncertainty and insecurity, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century. Lambton's study of Hajji Nur al-Din's problems in the 1820s to 1840s shows that claims to the land and its revenues between the central government, provincial officials and private individuals could be rather vaguely demarcated and often conflictual. The absence of a land registration department, complexities of legal recourse, personal and arbitrary nature of royal grants and difficulties of enforcing them locally were daunting obstacles to the would-be landowner.<sup>240</sup> What our discussion has established is that despite the hazards involved, land came to be regarded as an ever more prized source of wealth and prestige as the century wore on. This, it may be concluded, was due especially to Iran's closer integration into world markets, which simultaneously increased the needs of the upper and upper-middle classes for sources of income, and made land the best generator of this through cash crops for export. The new landlords—whether of merchant, bureaucratic or tribal background—came to wield considerable political-economic power, as Lambton observes: "Throughout the Qājār period the landowning classes (which included the tribal *khāns*) were the most powerful element in the kingdom."<sup>241</sup> On the other hand, their diverse origins undercut the unity which this potential class power might have engendered.

**Taxes, shares, rents.** The state's land tax rose inexorably in the course of the century. In the early 1800s, Malcolm said it varied from 5 to 20 percent of the crop, depending on what type of irrigation was used.<sup>242</sup> Fath 'Ali Shah is said to have raised it from one-tenth to one-fifth during his

<sup>239</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 155-57.

<sup>240</sup> Lambton, "The Case of Hajji Nur al-Din," 70-71.

<sup>241</sup> *Idem*, *Landlord and Peasant*, 140.

<sup>242</sup> Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), II, 337.

reign (1797-1834).<sup>243</sup> Olson notes a *de facto* hike to one-third by the 1850s, because it was now one-third *before* rather than *after* setting aside seed for the next year's crops.<sup>244</sup> Curzon estimated the land tax at 25 percent in 1892, confirming that a rise had occurred over the century.<sup>245</sup> In 1882 Stack said that the rate was higher on crown land than private land (although here the rent may be being added to the tax).<sup>246</sup> Gurney reports a case of land tax paid on *vaqf* land, which was theoretically (and normally) exempt.<sup>247</sup> To the regular land tax was added, as in Safavid times, an array of "extraordinary" taxes and requisitions, whose variety is suggested by Malcolm:

If an addition is made to the army—if the king desires to construct an aqueduct or build a palace—if troops are marching through the country, and require to be furnished with provisions—if a foreign mission arrives in Persia—if one of the royal family is married—in short, on any occurrence more than ordinary, an impost is laid, sometimes on the whole kingdom, at others only on particular provinces.<sup>248</sup>

Thomson found in 1868 that "irregular exactions amount to a sum equal to the legal assessments."<sup>249</sup> What is worse, over time the extraordinary taxes tended to become considered ordinary and were added in again; in this way Qum's assessment rose from 12,000 to 25,000 tomans, Qumisheh's from 7,000 to 23,000.<sup>250</sup> Morier called these extraordinary taxes "the most grievous to the *rayat* [cultivator]"; Lambton feels they "frequently led to the ruin of whole districts."<sup>251</sup> She also observes cases of tax resistance—"few villages paid without requisition.... Arrears were common." Shortly before his death, Fath 'Ali Shah was planning a *war* campaign in Fars to collect the tax arrears.<sup>252</sup> Summing up these trends as a whole, Katouzian discerns a rise in the land tax rate from 25-30 percent over 1800-1870 (15 percent regular plus 10-15 percent extraordinary) to 35-40 percent in the 1880s-1900 (25 plus 10-15 percent).<sup>253</sup>

<sup>243</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 145.

<sup>244</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 175-76, 415 note 9.

<sup>245</sup> Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, 471, cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 170.

<sup>246</sup> Stack is cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 166.

<sup>247</sup> Gurney, "A Qajar Household," 141.

<sup>248</sup> Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), II, 342, cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 149, with slight corrections mine.

<sup>249</sup> R. F. Thomson, "Report on Persia," 1867-68, pp. 27-32 in Issawi, *EHI*, 30.

<sup>250</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 145, 144-45 note 6.

<sup>251</sup> Morier is cited in *ibid.*, 149; 170.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>253</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 33.

Villages were assessed in a lump sum, and the headmen or elders would break it down for the individual cultivators. Taxes were paid partly in kind and partly in cash, so that falls or increases in prices were shared.<sup>254</sup> Examples of this arrangement can be seen at Hajji Nur al-Din's villages, which were assessed at 478.2 tomans and 397.42 loads of grain.<sup>255</sup> Judging from Thomson's 1868 breakdown of the state's revenues it seems that in-kind payments composed only about one-eighth of the total provincial land revenue,<sup>256</sup> but this does not necessarily mean that the peasants themselves paid in cash (see below). Rather, the landlords or provincial governors may have taken the crops and marketed them, to forward the state's taxes in cash. Indeed the provincial governor was at liberty to collect the maximum possible and remit only what the state demanded or would be satisfied with.<sup>257</sup> A tax reform of 1885-86 attempted to regulate the conduits of tax remission by forbidding tax collectors to enter villages as long as the local headmen met their regular obligations. It fixed the state tax rate at ten percent in kind on grains, and in cash on vegetables and other market crops. Military and road services were also expected: "One man per 180 male Muslims in each village was to be taken annually for military service, and 150 *tūmāns* for every 180 male non-Muslims." All males from 16 to 50 had to spend 4-5 days a year working in road construction as well.<sup>258</sup> It is not known how strictly these regulations were observed; one imagines that the state was both unable to protect the peasant from paying more to the provincial authorities and unable to extract all the services owed by the villages in a great many areas.

Turning now to the share or rent paid by peasants to the landowner, we find that the crop-sharing mode of production continued to function, with to some extent a transition to payment of the share in cash, and even of payment of a fixed sum (not a share) in rent. Both Lambton and Gilbar note that sharecropping was the usual arrangement through the mid-nineteenth century, and Stack observed sharecropping in various areas in 1882, while a 1905 peasant balance sheet produced by Bausani indicates payment of various obligations in corn.<sup>259</sup> As Olson notes, there were

<sup>254</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 165.

<sup>255</sup> Lambton, "The Case of Hajji Nūr al-Dīn," 62.

<sup>256</sup> Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 29-30.

<sup>257</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 434, 435.

<sup>258</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 167, 169.

"innumerable variations" in the amounts surrendered: Gilbar puts it at one-third to one-half of the crop in general, and Good at one-third around Maragheh, while Fraser in 1820/21 found it as high as two-thirds in Nishapur (but the landlord paid the state out of his share—or kept it, if he had a *tiyul*); Stack found the same rate around Shiraz and Lar in 1882.<sup>260</sup> Pavlovitch in 1910 estimated the basic peasant rate at 20 percent, but this could rise as high as 85 percent if the landlord provided seed, draft animals and tools.<sup>261</sup> On crown lands peasants kept one-half of the crop and surrendered the other half to the shah, according to Malcolm and Waring, but Morier says that around Isfahan the peasant kept only one-fourth (these are all early nineteenth-century estimates).<sup>262</sup> The amount varied by the type of crop as well: peasants kept two-thirds to four-fifths of unirrigated wheat in Maragheh, and as much as one-half of the valuable silk and rice crops in the Caspian area in the 1860s.<sup>263</sup> Within large villages, it should be noted, shares were given to individuals who performed services for all, such as the craftspeople, bath attendants, crop guards, *mulla* and headman.<sup>264</sup>

On the more high-value export cash crops, rent came to be taken more commonly in cash as the century wore on. Paying in cash was not a radical departure in itself, since it could still involve simple calculation of the cash value of the stipulated share of the crop. But as commercialization of agriculture spread with export crops and had already existed in the case of market gardening near towns, there was a trend to pay a fixed sum as rent. This was especially the case with certain lucrative crops such as opium and silk by the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>265</sup> Landlords liked this because they could pay their tenants a set amount and then sell the whole crop for a large profit, thus

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 145, 166 and 173 (citing Stack); Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 189; Bausani, *The Persians*, 174-75. See also Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 157, and Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 235.

<sup>260</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 414 note 6; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 189; Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 156; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 173 (for Fraser) and 172 (for Stack).

<sup>261</sup> Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire," 620.

<sup>262</sup> All cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 148-49.

<sup>263</sup> Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 156; Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 54-55; Issawi, *EHI*, 242.

<sup>264</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 560; Eric J. Hooglund, "Rural Socioeconomic Organization in Transition: The Case of Iran's Bonchs," pp. 191-207 in Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran. The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 198-201.

<sup>265</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 185; F. Lafont and H.-L. Rabino, *L'industrie séricole en Perse* (Montpellier, 1910), extracts translated pp. 235-238 in Issawi, *EHI*, 236.

effectively increasing their share. This procedure also imbricated peasants more deeply in the vicissitudes of a cash economy, furthering their dependence on landlords and moneylenders. The depth of this incipient transition to capitalist relations is hard to measure; my sense is that sharecropping continued to predominate on the whole even in late Qajar Iran.<sup>266</sup> Although the rise in agricultural exports must have led to a somewhat more cash-oriented agrarian sector, we are still a long way from capitalist production relations on any wide scale.<sup>267</sup>

**Peasants in Qajar Iran.** Although Ann Lambton, an outstanding investigator of agrarian Iran, has despaired, "It is also true that we know little of [the cultivator's] actual conditions,"<sup>268</sup> we must nevertheless try to draw together such data as we possess here. In the 1820s Fraser described the "customary" rights of peasants:

The original customary law regarding landed property, clearly provided with much consideration for the security of the ryot [*ra'iat* = peasant]. The rights of the villager were guarded at least as carefully as those of his lord: his title to cultivate his portion of land descends to him from the original commencement of the village to which he belongs, and can neither be disputed nor refused him; nor can he forfeit it, nor can the lord of the village eject any ryot, while he conducts himself well, and pays his portion of the rent. In fact, the proprietor has nothing to do with the individuals of his property; he has to treat with each village collectively, and none can forfeit his right to cultivate his share, save by general consent in an assembly of the whole, headed by the *Reish suffeed* [village elder], which is the only paramount authority in such a case. The ryot, however, if he dislikes his terms, his service, or desires it on other accounts, has a right to remove from any village, unless he be liable for a portion of the *māleyāt* or taxes; in which case he cannot move unless the rest of the villagers take on themselves the payment of his portion.<sup>269</sup>

Though peasants enjoyed some protection through such customary prerogatives, Fraser goes on to note: "... it is almost needless, after what has already been said throughout this work, to add, that the whole of the customary law is rendered nugatory by the encroachments and arbitrary character of the government and its officers."<sup>270</sup> Lambton concludes generally that "there seems little doubt that the old village organization, in so far as it remained, was broken down during the course of the

<sup>266</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 148-49, also judges that those renting land for a fixed amount were a small group, found in the more prosperous northwest.

<sup>267</sup> This conclusion is shared by Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 579.

<sup>268</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 175.

<sup>269</sup> James B. Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey into Khorasān in the Years 1821 and 1822* (London, 1825 [reprinted Delhi, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984]), 208-209.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

nineteenth century."<sup>271</sup> Though landlords did increase their power at villagers' expense, the labor process seems to have remained substantially under peasant control. Again, Fraser:

The cultivation of the village is carried on in various ways; there are a certain number of ploughs, and yokes of oxen, belonging to the villages, and each man, as he requires his ground to be ploughed, borrows those of his neighbors, or takes them at a fixed rate per day, and returns or receives the like number of days' labour, as the case may be, in compensation. These arrangements having no reference to any but the villagers themselves, are made among them, and may vary in every different community: the reish-suffed settles all disputes.<sup>272</sup>

Eric Hooglund's work on Iran's rural production system discloses the old—perhaps ancient—origins of work teams or cooperatives (known as *bunehs*) and their autonomy in dealing with landlords and organizing production in Qajar times. A given village could have several or more *bunehs* of 3 to 14 men each, with a head, assistant and workers who labored as a unit and took roughly equal shares of the product after paying rent and taxes.<sup>273</sup>

Some internal stratification within and between villages certainly existed. Villages varied widely in size, nearness to markets, fertility of soil and other favorable production factors. Lambton's data on the Nihavand and Khazal districts around 1880, for example, shows that the average size of holdings varied between villages: 37 of 77 villages had less than 10 peasants per ploughland (*zouf*), 36 were more crowded at 10-20 peasants per ploughland, and 4 were extremely landpoor at over 20 peasants per ploughland.<sup>274</sup> Within villages too, despite the egalitarian nature of the *buneh* system, one might find well-to-do peasants with more than a subsistence-size plot, sharecroppers with less than enough land to live on, and laborers with either fixed work or seasonal employment on a daily basis, as well as to the majority of peasants who had *buneh* rights and subsistence-size holdings.<sup>275</sup> In addition to landlords, small-holding peasants might hire landless laborers, whose existence in various places and at different times in Qajar Iran is well-documented.<sup>276</sup> Though not widespread or common, it appears that in Kirman, Baluchistan and parts

<sup>271</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 172.

<sup>272</sup> Fraser, *Narrative of a Journey*, 209.

<sup>273</sup> Hooglund, "Rural Socioeconomic Organization in Transition," 195-96, 198-201.

<sup>274</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 157. The text should read "10-20" and not "10-50", as corrected by personal correspondence with Ann Lambton, February 16, 1987.

<sup>275</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 148-49.

<sup>276</sup> Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 157; Bausani, *The Persians*, 174-75; Nowshirvani, "The Be-

of Fars peasants could be bought and sold like slaves. In 1907 the Russian consul in Sistan wrote:

In Sistan they sell slaves, white and black, delivered openly in Baluchistan and other regions. Almost every village headman in Sistan has a male or female slave. The price of a strong young male slave in Sistan is on average 50 to 80 tomans. The female slaves are cheaper. Relations with slaves are humane.<sup>277</sup>

In Quchan (Khurasan) in 1905 when villagers could not pay their taxes due to drought, the governor took 300 girls in lieu of taxes, and sold them to the Turkomans and other tribal khans.<sup>278</sup>

The situation of women in general was difficult. One recalls Pavlovitch's allegation that landlords had or took the right of temporarily marrying their peasants' daughters. Village women certainly lived less gender-restricted lives than their veiled counterparts in urban settings; Fraser said "the wives and daughters of the peasantry pursue their occupations like those of the same class of Europe."<sup>279</sup> As craft activities such as making clothing were somewhat undermined in villages over the course of the century, Gilbar argues that women abandoned domestic industries to some extent and "joined the men in their field work."<sup>280</sup> Craft production in general, which involved men as well as women, must have persisted to a considerable degree nevertheless. S. G. W. Benjamin described the fashioning of raw silk by women in Gilan and Mazandaran into trousers, shirts and handkerchiefs for home use in 1887, while the British consul at Isfahan reported in 1892 that "the women in the village [of Haft Taher] were all employed in making *givas* [a native Iranian cloth shoe].... These *givas* are taken to Yazd and Isfahan for sale, during harvest time, some 15 pairs are made daily, in winter about 25 pairs."<sup>281</sup> Carpets, originally for home use and local markets, burgeoned into a major handicraft industry in the late nineteenth century, much of whose production took place in village settings.

ginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 576; Issawi, *EHI*, 40-41; Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 339.

<sup>277</sup> Dr. A. Miller, *Proshloe i nastoyashchee Seistana* (Saint Petersburg, 1907), quoted by Issawi, *EHI*, 126.

<sup>278</sup> M.S. Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran* [Modern History of Iran], translated from the Russian by Hushang Tizabi and Hasan Qa'em Panch (Stockholm: Tudeh Publishing Centre, 1356/1977), 11, based on Nazim al-Islam Kirmani, *Tarikh-i Bidari-yi Iranian* [History of the Awakening of the Iranians], II, 198.

<sup>279</sup> James B. Fraser, *Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1833), 260.

<sup>280</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 361-62.

<sup>281</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 575, cites the 1892 British report. S.G.W. Benjamin, *Persia and the Persians* (London, 1887), 418, is cited by Seyf, "Silk Production and Trade," 57.

A major debate has raged in the literature over whether Iran's peasantry experienced a decline or improvement in their living standards in the course of the nineteenth century. Nowshirvani and especially Gilbar have argued that as agriculture was commercialized and trade expanded, the peasants registered improved consumption patterns, while Keddie and Seyf, backed up by Lambton, Issawi and Olson, have argued that on the contrary, a deterioration occurred. Despite the somewhat mixed nature of the evidence, and the excellent empirical research done by both Gilbar and Nowshirvani on the Qajar economy, I side strongly with the theorists of decline in this debate.

Let us begin to sift through it by reviewing a representative sample of eyewitness accounts taken in chronological order. John Malcolm, assessing the standard of living in the first decade of the nineteenth century, commented that "... among the other classes [including the peasantry], though few are rich, hardly any are in actual want."<sup>282</sup> Fraser, writing in the 1820s, gives a rather mixed set of judgments reminiscent of those offered by Chardin 150 years earlier:

The cultivators of the soil ... are those on whom the tyranny of their rulers falls the most heavily. Yet their houses are comfortable and neat, and are seldom found without a supply of good wheaten cakes, some mas or sour milk, and cheese—often fruit makes its appearance, and sometimes a preparation of meat, in soup or in pillau. Their wives and children, as well as themselves, are sufficiently though coarsely clad; and if a guest arrives, there are few who cannot display a numed or felt carpet in a room for his reception. In fact, the high rate of wages proves that the profits of agriculture are high, while food is cheap; and we may be satisfied, that in spite of rapacity, enforced by torture [!], no small share of the gain is hoarded by the farmer.<sup>283</sup>

At least in all that touches on living standards this is quite favorable. In the late 1830s Rawlinson talked with peasants in Azerbaijan near Lake Urumiya, who confirmed the deprivations of exploitation:

'What does it signify to us', said the poor Kurdish ra'yyahs, 'whether the Kará-pápás, or the Mokeddems, or the Tabrízís, govern Soldúz? We labour hard every day of the year, and we can still only just get bread to keep our wives and children from starving, going about, ourselves barefoot and in rags, as you see us' ...<sup>284</sup>

<sup>282</sup> Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), II, 353, cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 137.

<sup>283</sup> Fraser, *Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia*, 258.

<sup>284</sup> Rawlinson, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz," 14, cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 190.

According to Eastwick, the peasants of Mazandaran in 1861 were badly clothed, housed and fed:

"... the bare walls of the mud huts and scanty clothing and thin faces of the inhabitants, confirmed their distress."<sup>285</sup> In wealthier Gilan, Abbott noted in 1865 that "the peasantry are heavily in debt to their landlords, who exact an usurious rate of interest; from 25 to 40 per cent being the lowest figure upon such loans."<sup>286</sup> As to diet, George Jenner of the British Legation reported in 1870 that in periods of *no scarcity*:

... the winter diet ... consists almost entirely of bread, rice, and bad cheese, with a small quantity of tea... the summer diet of bread and "sayfi", or summer produce, *i.e.*, melons, cucumbers, vegetable marrows, eggplants, and various forms of edible gourds.<sup>287</sup>

There is no mention here of meat, eggs or milk. Shortly after this occurred the Great Famine, vividly described by the Zill al-Sultan, the shah's eldest son, on a trip from Isfahan to Tehran:

People were so desperate that they ate cats and dogs, even human corpses.... From our first stop in Fars till Tehran, we passed by only dead corpses; we saw corpses strewn along the road, or people who had been murdered by the hungry, in hopes of getting whatever they had; we saw those about to die.... I cannot possibly describe the misery of the people.<sup>288</sup>

In 1878 the British consul at Rasht found the local peasantry earning "no less than" five to nine pounds sterling a year (compared to two pounds in India); they ate rice, and "meat is cheap."<sup>289</sup>

Two accounts from the 1890s present similarly conflicting data. The British consul Lascelles, traveling in the south in 1892-93 found the situation in Fars "quite indescribable": "... the people say that never in their recollection have they been so badly treated, so utterly thrust down by oppression,"<sup>290</sup> while Thomas Gordon wrote in 1896 that

... improvement in the circumstances of the cultivators had taken place more or less all over the country...

In the course of my journeying in Persia, I generally found excellent quarters in the

<sup>285</sup> Edward B. Eastwick, *Journal of a Diplomat's Three Years' Residence in Persia* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1864), 3 volumes: II, 86, cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 191.

<sup>286</sup> Abbott's report on Gilan in 1865 is cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 192.

<sup>287</sup> Jenner is cited by Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 140.

<sup>288</sup> Mas'ud Mirza Zill al-Sultan, *Tarikh-i Sarguzasht-i Mas'udi* [History of Mas'ud's Narrative] (Tehran, 1325 Q./1907), 210-11, cited by Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 39-40.

<sup>289</sup> The British consul is cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 40.

<sup>290</sup> Lascelles's report of January 13, 1893 is cited by Hakimian, "Wage Labor and Migration," 453.

village houses. The rather mean outer appearance of the dwellings conveys the idea of poor accommodation within, but the reality is a pleasing disclosure of plain but well-carpeted rooms, with dados of matting or felt for the backs of the sitters by the wall.

... On the whole, it may be said that the peasantry and labouring classes in Persia are fairly well off, and I think that their condition can bear a favourable comparison with that of the same classes in other countries.<sup>291</sup>

MacLean's 1904 report on the condition of the peasantry judges that basically bad conditions have been somewhat improved:

Information obtained at the various places visited tended to show that the peasant is somewhat less hardly treated by the landlord and taxcollector, and is better clothed and better fed than formerly, and that more land has been brought under cultivation. Of course these circumstances have varied in different localities: in parts of the south, elsewhere referred to, extreme hardship has been reported, and in Gilan and Khurasan unusual prosperity.<sup>292</sup>

We have, then, a highly variegated record, with favorable reports from the early nineteenth century and again at the turn of the twentieth, framing a skein of more depressed descriptions. In part these observations reflect the differences, as suggested by MacLean, in regions visited, and the specific conjunctures (of famine or drought, for example). In part too they reflect the different strata and situations that we have seen existed within the peasantry in this period of change. Gilbar observes that the better-off peasants tended to be those who owned their own land or worked on the estates of landlords who lived there and took an interest in their development, but both of these groups were in a distinct minority.<sup>293</sup> His broader, more radical argument is that while there had been only marginal change in the peasantry's difficult circumstances from 1800 to 1850, later "a certain improvement in the standard of living of the peasants took place." Evidence of this is held to be increased peasant consumption of "Sugar, tea, tobacco and opium," and local and foreign industrial goods, especially textiles.<sup>294</sup> Nowshirvani makes a similar argument about consumption "beyond the bare minimum of food and clothing," again based on the same items, and evidently finding participation in a cash economy indicative of improved material standards.<sup>295</sup> Keddie quite correctly

<sup>291</sup> Sir Thomas E. Gordon, *Persia Revisited* (London, 1896), 39-40, cited by Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 365.

<sup>292</sup> MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," in Issawi, *EHI*, 142.

<sup>293</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 192-95.

<sup>294</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 363. For his more sober assessment of the period from 1800 to 1850, see "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 188, 195.

<sup>295</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 576-77, though he himself cites an 1893 British report from Sistan: "The people are so wretchedly poor that there is no demand for these things. They

finds consumption of "goods" such as sugar and tea, tobacco and opium dubious proof of improved standards of nutrition.<sup>296</sup> Moreover, the commercialization of agriculture meant less production of basic foodstuffs, higher rents and prices, and increasing indebtedness.<sup>297</sup> Having meager savings and cash on hand was of little help in a drought or famine, especially when transport was as poor as in Qajar Iran.<sup>298</sup> The large numbers of peasants who joined the urban lower classes in migrating to Russia to search for work (a trend analyzed under the urban sector below) is further indication of a crisis of underemployment in the rural sector; peasants also migrated to other agricultural areas, cities and the southern oil fields.<sup>299</sup> Though the travellers accounts are somewhat more mixed than Keddie suggests, I agree with her main contention that conditions worsened rather than improved in the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>300</sup> As Issawi concludes, "... even in normal times, the mass of Iranians lived at a very low level."<sup>301</sup> The subsistence-level existence of Iran's peasantry, difficult as it had been in the first half of the nineteenth century, would seem on balance to have worsened after 1850 until the end of our period in 1914, due in large measure to the commercialization of agriculture in the broader context of Iran's increasingly dependent and peripheral position in the world system.

**Cultural attitudes and class consciousness among the agrarian classes.** Determining the attitudes and values of landlords and peasants in the nineteenth century is unfortunately made difficult by a real lack of data, at least in the sources I have been able to consult. Presumably more evidence does exist—for the landlord class perhaps especially in Persian biographies and memoirs of leading political figures, and there may be more data on the peasantry in both Russian and Persian-language sources. For now, we must examine such bits and pieces of information as we have, and make educated inferences based on a general grasp of the social structure; in Chapter Five a little

make their own clothes and don't drink tea."

<sup>296</sup> Keddie, "Introduction" to *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society*, 5.

<sup>297</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 185, 187-88, 418 note 36.

<sup>298</sup> Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 238.

<sup>299</sup> Pakdaman, "Preface," 126; Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 49; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 576.

<sup>300</sup> Keddie, "The Economic History of Iran," 125; Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 2, 4.

<sup>301</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 22. Cf. Lambton on the peasantry in mid-century: "There was no security of life or property, and peasants in particular were subjected to grinding tyranny": "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 454.

more light will be shed on these subjects in the course of studying participation in the various social movements.

It has already been established that landlords possessed considerable authority—economic, political and juridical—and along with this one may assume there went such personal characteristics as a sense of their own superiority and disdain mixed with paternalism for “their” peasants. The 1877 document drawn up by Mustafa Khan, a government official at Mashhad, on how to supervise his properties in his absence, affords valuable glimpses into his feelings about his peasants, servants and family members. Gurney summarizes his attitude toward the peasants who worked for him:

Peasants were of course vital to the agricultural process, but, in his view, they had to be threatened, cajoled, exhorted to plough immediately after the harvest, to replant with green shoots, to squeeze in another harvest of staple or cash crop in the continuous cycle of cultivation of the overworked land. ‘The peasants are lazy,’ they have to be goaded to plough for next year’s harvest, two or three times deeply, so that a whip might go into the ground as far as its handle or a man’s foot to above the ankle; otherwise they would have to do it again.<sup>302</sup>

The peasants are lazy and must constantly be forced to work sums up his view of them. Suspicion and mistrust, as well as an assumed air of authority, are also evidenced in his attitudes toward private property: “Guards had to be placed over the fruit trees; it was even feared that the roses would be stolen—‘no-one has the right to smell or pick a rose’.”<sup>303</sup> Ownership is an absolute value and a right which he exercises in an unquestioned and unquestioning way. He shows, too, conscientiousness and concern for the beautiful appearance of the shrine’s property, which he rented as a market garden—a desire to preserve its orderliness and honor its sacredness.<sup>304</sup>

In his dealings with his household, Gurney discerns Mustafa Khan’s “totally dominant, authoritarian position.”<sup>305</sup> He is clearly the master of his servants, for whom he seems to feel only a little less distrust than for the more distant and intractable peasants outside the city:

Some he must have known intimately, but his mind turned more readily to the fear of punishment, fines for breakages, the withholding of a month’s wages and rations, as the

<sup>302</sup> Gurney, “A Qajar Household,” 146.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

basic deterrents rather than any mutual trust or affection. In sickness they would be well-treated; in death they would be buried with honour and respect, as fitting for a member of his household; but their daily relationships seem to be governed by the same deep-rooted apprehension.<sup>306</sup>

In the absence of his wife (who for unspecified reasons no longer lived in the household), all his affection was directed toward his two year-old son. His love, solicitude and favor for this boy emerge from the detailed instructions calling for medical exams for the child and his wetnurse, constant playmates, new clothes, toys, trips to town, watching over, and the best possible medical treatment in case of sickness.<sup>307</sup> The patriarch is as benevolent toward his own children as he is the stern taskmaster of his peasants and master of his servants. This single portrait must for now stand in for a whole class of landowners.

In the face of strong systems of social control and increasing landlord power in the Qajar period, peasants probably reacted with their own mixture of deference, resentment and resistance. A sense of injustice and the unyielding nature of oppression can be heard in the words of the peasantry of Solduz, cited above: "What does it signify to us ... whether the Kará-pápás, or the Mokeddems, or the Tabrízís, govern Soldúz? We labour hard every day of the year, and we can still only just get bread to keep our wives and children from starving, going about, ourselves barefoot and in rags..."<sup>308</sup> Communal traditions and buneh work cooperatives engendered a sense of solidarity and mutual aid which had to withstand the threats posed by changing economic pressures as agriculture was touched by the new world markets. An untenable situation might find a response in the decision to migrate in hopes of a better life elsewhere. Such aspirations were perhaps inchoately reflected in the reaction of some northern peasants to Russian agitation calculated to make them wish for a change of rulers; Tigranoff wrote that peasants in Azerbaijan had asked him when Russia was going to annex the province.<sup>309</sup> A combination of respect and criticism was also due the ulama: respect for the mujtahids of Karbala and elsewhere who continued to support peasants' efforts to lower taxes and correct abuses, but something less for those who became landowners and were called "false

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 151, 155-58.

<sup>308</sup> Rawlinson, "Notes on a Journey to Tabriz," 14, cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 190.

<sup>309</sup> Tigranoff, *The Economic and Social Situation in Persia* [in Russian] (Saint Petersburg, 1909), cited by

mujtahids" by "the indignant people."<sup>310</sup> The difficulties of organizing for redress on any level beyond the local village-landlord relation were great, given the isolation and mutual suspicion of one village for another. The roles played by peasants in the Constitutional Revolution will show they were not completely passive or apathetic politically, but that there were effective limits to their militancy and participation.

## II.C. The Urban Sector

After a brief overview of urban demographic change, this section will proceed to an analysis of the key social classes and groups of the Qajar period—merchants, artisans, ulama, and lower classes—plus the new classes and groups in formation—industrialists and workers, and intelligentsia. As in Chapter Two's look at social structure, the situation of religious minorities and of women will also be examined, and we will close with a discussion of urban ideologies, attitudes and culture.

**The urban population.** The urban population is said to have grown from 10-14 percent of the total population of Iran in 1800 to 20-25 percent by 1914 (recall Table 4.8). In numbers of people this would be an increase from perhaps 500-800,000 in 1800 to about 2-2,500,000 in 1914.<sup>311</sup> The figures from 1800 can be compared with our Chapter Two estimates for the seventeenth century of about one million people (10-15 percent of the total) in Table 2.7, suggesting the losses suffered in the destruction of the eighteenth. Table 4.13 further nuances these estimates by looking at population change in select cities. In terms of total urban population, Table 4.13 suggests that the higher figure for 1800 of 800,000 may be closer to the mark than the lower (in fact, if one removes Harat's 100,000 from the list we have a low estimate of 738,000). Growth through 1868 seems to have been slow, from ca. 738,000 to 841,000 or more; then, as in the case of the total population of Iran, we see fairly rapid growth from 1868 to 1914 of from ca. 850,000 to perhaps 1,350,000 (again, Table

Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire," 623.

<sup>310</sup> Pavlovitch, "La Situation agraire," 621.

<sup>311</sup> Comparing Tables 4.7 and 4.8 gives a figure of 500-600,000 in 1800, while Hambly, "An Introduction to the Economic Organization," suggests a figure closer to 800,000, as does Bémont, according to Issawi, *EHI*, 26. The 1914 estimates derive from Tables 4.7 and 4.8. In between, in 1881, Houtum-Schindler put the urban population at 1,963,000: Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 61.

4.13 suggests that the 1914 urban population may have been rather less than the experts' 20-25 per cent and 2-2.5 million people). In terms of individual cities, the growth of Tehran, the capital, and Tabriz, the main trade emporium for most of the century, were the most phenomenal. Tehran grew because it was the hub of the Qajar state, attracting services, trade and unskilled labor in great amounts by 1900. In 1868, 62 percent of its population had been born elsewhere. Estimates vary a great deal as to its total population, with Curzon saying it reached 200,000 by 1890, Issawi and de Planhol only in 1920. But Gilbar has it at 280,000 in 1908, and Sobotsinskii at 350,000 in 1914.<sup>312</sup> Tabriz on the other hand grew most rapidly from 1800 to the 1870s, during which time it was Iran's major commercial city; after that, Gilbar and Issawi find it grew far more slowly, as trade shifted to Tehran which by 1914 had surpassed it in size and importance.<sup>313</sup> Isfahan was dominant, although diminished in size, in the south. From its Safavid peak of 225-600,000 it was only 100-200,000 in 1800 and declined further to 60-70,000 in 1868 before growing to 80-90,000 by 1914; it reached 200,000 again only in the 1950s.<sup>314</sup> Its decline, and the stagnation or decline of other important cities, such as Yazd, Kirmanshah and Kashan, may well be linked to the undermining of the handicraft sector, which we shall examine below. The growth of certain northern towns, especially Rasht, reflects the importance of trade with Russia, as that of Bushire in the Gulf reflects the growing trade with India and England. Two further demographic notes: Sobotsinskii estimated the size of the average urban household at six persons (compared to five in the villages); and Floor puts the economically active urban male population at 400,000 in 1910.<sup>315</sup> There were also many women and children under the age of ten active in the urban economy. Available data on the specific numbers of artisans, workers, merchants and others will be considered in the corresponding sections below.

**Merchants.** The category of merchants in Qajar Iran covered a disparate group of people, divided internally with respect to types of activity, wealth and power. Merchants engaged above all

<sup>312</sup> Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 149-50; Pakdaman, "Preface," 126; Issawi, *EHI*, 26; X. de Planhol, "The Geography of Settlement," pp. 409-467 in Fisher, editor, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, I, 445.

<sup>313</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 27, 27 note 5; Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 151; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 181.

<sup>314</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 26.

<sup>315</sup> Sobotsinskii, *Persiya*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 34; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran 1900-1941*, Occasional Paper Series, number 23 (University of Durham, England: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1984), 4.

Table 4.13  
Population Change, Select Cities, 1800-1914

City	ca. 1800	1868	ca. 1914
Isfahan	100-200,000	60-70,000	80-90,000
Harat	100,000	(in Afghanistan)	(in Afghanistan)
Yazd	60-100,000	40,000	50,000
Tehran	60,000	85,000	200-350,000
Kirmanshah	45-50,000	30,000	50,000
Kashan	45-50,000	10,000	30,000
Tabriz	30-60,000	110-150,000	200-300,000
Mashhad	30-50,000	70,000	70,000
Hamadan	30-40,000	30,000	50,000
Qazvin	25-50,000	25,000	40,000
Shiraz	20-40,000	25,000	30,000
Khoi	20-30,000	20,000	50,000
Kirman	20-30,000	30,000	50,000
Barfarush	n.a.	10,000	40,000
Sanna	n.a.	20,000	30-32,000
Amol	n.a.	8,000	20-40,000
Astarabad	n.a.	18,000	10,000
Tabas	20,000	n.a.	6-8,000
Turbat-i Haydari	18,000	32-35,000	12-15,000
Nishapur	15,000	8,000	10,000
Maragheh	15,000	15,000	15,000
Dizful	n.a.	15,000	n.a.
Sari	n.a.	15,000	8,000
Shushtar	15,000	25,000	10,000
Rasht	10-20,000	18,000	25-40,000
Erivan	10-14,000	(in Russia)	(in Russia)
Urumiya	12,000	30,000	20,000
Burujird	12,000	10,000	n.a.
Lar	12,000	n.a.	n.a.
Zanjan	10-11,000	20,000	20,000
Qum	10,000	12,000	30,000
Bushire	8-9,000	18,000	15-20,000
Total	838,000-1,129,000	841,000-894,000	1,208,000-1,515,000

Sources: For 1800: Hambly, "An Introduction to the Economic Organization," 72-73, and Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," based mainly on Kinneir, Tancoigne, Fraser and Ousley. For 1868: Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 28; Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 151; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 182. For 1914: Sobotsinskii, *Persiya*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 34; Issawi, *EHI*, 27; Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 131; Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 149-51; Ludwig W. Adamec, editor, *Historical Gazetteer of Iran*, volume I: *Tehran and Northwestern Iran* (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 35, 92, 574, 614, 710; vol. II, *Meshed and Northeastern Iran* (1981), 39, 636, 654. Nb. "Total" column uses closest available estimate for "n.a." (not available) cases.

in trade, of course—selling domestic agricultural, handicraft and tribal products throughout Iran and engaging in the foreign import and export trade. In the absence of a state-sponsored or otherwise separate institutional banking system, they were also the bankers and creditors of the country, advancing large sums to the state and its officials, and smaller sums, at rates as high as 20 to 144 percent a year, to other individuals.<sup>316</sup> They became very active in landownership, as we have already seen, buying land from the state, stimulating export agriculture and also buying and selling urban real estate. A final area of endeavor lay in traditional handicraft and modern urban factory industries, where considerable sums were invested before 1914; this topic will be treated below as the emergence of a new industrialist class and its attendant working class. Some of the terms used to denote these different functions have been gathered by Floor: *tajir* (pl. *tujjar*)—a big merchant in wholesaling and/or import/export trade; *bunakdar*—a market distributor, wholesaler acting as middle man between a *tajir* and retail dealer; *furush*—a “trader,” small retailer; *sarraf*—a banker, moneylender; *dallal*—a broker who found customers, set prices and oversaw payment, for one-half to one percent of the transaction, at no risk.<sup>317</sup>

Another, cross-cutting way to classify Iran's merchants is in terms of Afshari's distinction between the *tujjar* as “prosperous traders and bankers ... well-to-do merchants,” and *pishivaran*—“the small merchants who owned shops in the bazaars and worked with little or no help from hired adult workers” (the term *kasabeh* also signifies small traders, while the *pishivaran* included artisans as well).<sup>318</sup> In looking at Iran's big merchants from 1800 to 1914, two trends emerge: a growth in their wealth, and a diversification into new activities and types of organization. The French diplomat Gardane describes the person he took to be Iran's wealthiest merchant in 1807:

In Tehran, Mirza Taqi, who has the title of *malik al tujjar*, or dean of the merchants of the realm. He may be presumed to be worth 30,000 tumans—public opinion credits him with 50,000. His trade consists only of precious stones, which he buys from foreigners and sells to the king, at a profit of 20 percent.<sup>319</sup>

<sup>316</sup> Seyf, “Commercialization of Agriculture,” 235.

<sup>317</sup> W. M. Floor, “The Merchants (*tujjar*).”

<sup>318</sup> Muhammad Reza Afshari, “The *Pishivarān* and Merchants in Precapitalist Iranian Society: An Essay on the Background and Causes of the Constitutional Revolution,” pp. 133-155 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 15, number 2 (May 1983), 136.

<sup>319</sup> General Gardane, “Iran in 1807,” dispatches of December 24, 1807 and May 28, 1808, translated pp. 25-26 in Issawi, *EHI*, 25-26. Thirty to fifty thousand tumans at this time was worth about the same number of pounds

By mid-century, Iran's largest merchants appear to have been those involved in Tabriz's trade with Europe through Istanbul and Trabzon. Berezin found five large-scale merchants in Tabriz worth 150,000 rubles (about 50,000 tumans).<sup>320</sup> Gobineau wrote of the merchants in 1859: "They ... hold most of the capital of Persia."<sup>321</sup> A great concentration of wealth has been noted from the 1870s onward,<sup>322</sup> due mostly to increases in foreign imports and export crops. Atrpet comments: "Until 1880 there were few millionaires and rich property owners but in 1900 one could count them in hundreds."<sup>323</sup> Ashraf's list of 74 leading merchants and commercial houses in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz and Mashhad for ca. 1890-1900 suggests the structure of merchant capital. The wealthiest and most reputable merchants of Iran were Haj Muhammad Hasan Amin al-Zarb and the Tumanians brothers, both with capital of 2-3 million tumans. Thirteen merchants or companies had capital of 100-500,000 tumans, including one each with 500,000, 400,000 and 300,000 and two each with 200,000, 150,000 and 140,000. Below these came seven merchants worth 50-70,000 tumans and 20 worth 10-40,000.<sup>324</sup> Not included in this list is Hajji Aqa Muhammad Mu'in al-Tujjar of Bushire, "the financial king of southern Iran," involved in mining, foreign trade and real estate alone worth one million tumans.<sup>325</sup> Abdullaev says the Amin al-Zarb family was worth 25 million tumans when Muhammad Hasan died in 1896, based on agriculture, banking and real estate, with offices in France, England and China. By 1908 however, his son, Hajji Muhammad Husayn, declared bankruptcy, owing the Russian Bank some five million rubles, broken by extortions from the shah and bad investments in industry.<sup>326</sup>

In the 1880s and 1890s we see the initial formation of large banking and trading companies uniting several large merchants in a single enterprise. These included the Aminiyyeh Company in

sterling.

<sup>320</sup> Berezin, *Puteshestvie...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 106. By then, 50,000 tumans was worth only 25,000 pounds sterling.

<sup>321</sup> Arthur de Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie* (Paris, 1859), extracts translated pp. 36-40 in Issawi, *EHI*, 36.

<sup>322</sup> Gad G. Gilbar, "The Big Merchants (*tujjar*) and the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1906," pp. 275-303 in *Asian and African Studies*, volume 11, number 3 (1977), 288.

<sup>323</sup> Atrpet, *Mamed Ali Shah* (Alexandropol, 1909), 141, cited by Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 43.

<sup>324</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 74-75.

<sup>325</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 44.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 43, 48. Nashat also says Amin al-Zarb was worth 25 million tumans: "From Bazaar to Market," 70.

1882; the Commercial Company of Iran with 350,000 tumans' capital in 1886; the Jahanian trading and banking firm in Yazd in 1890; the Mansuriyyeh Company of Yazd in 1892; the Fars Trading Company founded at Shiraz in 1896; the Ettehad Company from 1897 to 1912 at Tabriz; the Mas'udiyyeh Company in banking and commerce at Isfahan in 1898/99; the Islami Company at Isfahan established around the same time with 150,000 tumans for the distribution of local textiles; and from 1899 to 1904 the Umumi Company (General Company of Iran), founded by 17 Tehran merchants with one million tumans for internal and external trade, as well as banking and the construction of the road from Astara to Ardabil. Smaller companies were also established in Bushire, Sauj Bulagh, Shahrud, Tabriz and Gilan.<sup>327</sup> There were also several large Iranian shipping companies, such as the Persian Nasiri Navigation Company, founded ca. 1888 by high officials and opium merchants.<sup>328</sup> Some Iranian trading firms established branches abroad, in such places as Bombay, Karachi and Calcutta; Baghdad, Istanbul and Cairo; Kabul and Harat; Marv, Bukhara, Tashkent, Samarqand, Baku and Moscow; and as far away as Hong Kong, Marseilles, Lyons, Manchester, London, Leipzig and Vienna.<sup>329</sup> Some of these great companies, such as the Fars Trading Company, were successful for "many years"; a number of others failed to survive major problems of capital shortages and in some cases, embezzlement of funds.<sup>330</sup>

The number of large merchants was small in proportion to the rest of the urban population. Floor estimates them as one-half percent of Tehran's population in 1886, and 0.3 percent of Kashan's in 1850. By the 1890s, he counts 250 in Kerman, 250 in Yazd and 340 in Isfahan.<sup>331</sup> The 1931 Tehran census turns up 822 stores and shops owned by *tujjar*, involving 834 owners, 876 assistants and 134 errand boys, engaged in 14 lines of commercial activity ca. 1927.<sup>332</sup> A much more numerous group was comprised by Iran's small and medium merchants and traders. The same

<sup>327</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 44-45; Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 735-36.

<sup>328</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 342; Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 736-37.

<sup>329</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 183; Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 735; Gödel, *Über den pontischen Handelsweg*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 100.

<sup>330</sup> Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 736; Floor, "The Merchants (*tujjār*)," 128.

<sup>331</sup> Floor, "The Merchants (*tujjār*)," 106.

<sup>332</sup> The Tehran census of 1310/1931 is analyzed by Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 24.

census for Tehran shows 9,589 shops owned by traders (*kasabeh*), with 8,498 owners, 6,197 assistants and 1,538 errand boys, engaged in 89 different types of activity.<sup>333</sup> In 1905 in Ardabil, with 12-15,000 households, there were 1,165 shops (7.8-9.7 percent of the population), of which 250 were in textiles and 170 in foodstuffs. In Marandeh, with 2,500 households, there were 469 shops (18.76 percent), of which 157 were for groceries, 112 wholesale foodstuffs and 104 textiles.<sup>334</sup> The pattern of many small and medium merchants for each large one can be seen in Curzon's report that there were 144 moneylenders in Mashhad ca. 1890. Two of these had 100,000 tumans in capital, three had 50,000 and two 30,000: this left the vast majority—137—with under 4,000 tumans each (about 1,000 pounds sterling).<sup>335</sup> These small and medium merchants worked with much smaller amounts of capital than the large merchants. They paid more in taxes and road tolls owing to their inability to make "special arrangements" with the authorities.<sup>336</sup> At the bottom end of the scale they shaded off into the petty vendors, peddlers and hawkers who were part of the marginal and lower urban classes (discussed below).

Merchants in general and large merchants in particular faced certain common problems and enjoyed certain common advantages. Among their problems were the dangers of arbitrary confiscation, loss of property to the government when they died, nonrepayment of their loans to government officials and nonpayment by the government for goods delivered. Although Jacob Polak, who was Nasir al-Din Shah's chief physician from 1855 to 1864 says he never heard of a merchant's property being confiscated,<sup>337</sup> a contemporary chronicler commented on the insecurity of life and property:

How can anyone blessed with a pretty wife, a handsome house, or a valuable possession feel secure? Who dares reveal the extent of his possessions? Who is capable of insisting on his rights? Who can hope that his heirs will come to enjoy his fortune?<sup>338</sup>

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> Isawi, *EHI*, 67.

<sup>335</sup> Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 167-68.

<sup>336</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 344.

<sup>337</sup> Jacob Polak, *Persien: Das Land und seine Bewohner*, two volumes (Leipzig, 1865), II, 186, cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 205.

<sup>338</sup> Hajj Sayyid, *Khatirat* (Tehran, 1346/1967), 337-38, cited by Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 730.

On the positive side merchants were generally respected as honest and trustworthy, well-educated by general standards (up to 50-90 percent literate, according to Floor), and had more knowledge of international politics due to their contacts than the rest of the population.<sup>339</sup> They had links to the ulama through marriage, common residence in the bazaar, and religious taxes and commercial services. They enjoyed standing among the lower urban social classes through their good works—the building of schools, mosques and orphanages, feeding the poor and hungry during the religious holidays and organizing passion plays.<sup>340</sup> Some also developed ties to the ruling classes: “By marriage alliances, the acquisition of land and government service, the large merchants sometimes managed to become assimilated to the ruling classes.”<sup>341</sup>

Yet there was considerable tension in merchants' relations to the classes above them and the state. Economically as wealthy as the landowning and tribal elements who governed society, politically they found themselves on the same subordinate level as the rest of urban society.<sup>342</sup> Their relations with the state were crisscrossed by patterns of cooperation and conflict. Their role as creditors of a state in mounting fiscal crisis brought some of them monopolies, land revenue grants and other assets as securities.<sup>343</sup> They were in general lightly taxed with only a rent or fee on their shops in the bazaar, but suffered from higher customs and road tolls than did the foreigners.<sup>344</sup> While Europeans could import their goods for a five percent customs duty paid “once and for all,” an Iranian merchant importing the same item paid the duty plus road tolls at select points in the interior. The rate to transport goods to Tabriz in 1851 came to 7.5-14 percent; to cross Iran from Mazandaran or Mashhad to the Gulf in the early nineteenth century cost 20 to 30 percent.<sup>345</sup> By late century the more powerful among the large merchants in the opium trade were paying as little as 2-2.5 percent in

<sup>339</sup> Floor, “The Merchants (*tujjār*),” 102-103; Keddie, “Iran, 1797-1941,” 147.

<sup>340</sup> Floor, “The Merchants (*tujjār*),” 104; Ashraf and Hekmat, “Merchants and Artisans,” 731-32.

<sup>341</sup> Lambton, “Persia: The Breakdown of Society,” 438.

<sup>342</sup> Afshari, “The *Pishivarān* and Merchants,” 137, 142.

<sup>343</sup> Gilbar, “The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century,” 203, citing Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, 392-93; Hambly, “An Introduction to the Economic Organization,” 75.

<sup>344</sup> Keddie, “The Economic History of Iran,” 130; Keddie, “Iran, 1797-1941,” 148; Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 36.

<sup>345</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 81, citing British Foreign Office records; Lambton, “Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs,” 221.

customs and road tolls together. When the government tried to crack down on these abuses in the 1890s and 1900s, it was met with boycotts, strikes and protests.<sup>346</sup> There was thus a built-in potential for direct conflict between merchants and the state over issues of tariffs and road tolls, unmet financial obligations, and foreign control of the economy.

The third side of this equation was foreign capital, and here too patterns of cooperation and conflict oscillated and coexisted. In analyzing Iran's relations with Europe, as well as the agricultural economy, we have already seen the changing balance in economic power between foreigners and Iranians. By 1900 Russians controlled most of the foreign trade of the north, the British most of the commerce in the Gulf. The key export items, except for opium, and dried fruits and nuts, were in foreign hands. *Habl al-Matin* upbraided Iran's merchants in its editorial of May 18, 1906:

Look: In Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and other cities European businessmen are constantly setting up shops, obtaining concessions, and opening bank branches—and trade is slipping from your hands.

.... So far ten to twelve big companies and trade channels have been founded in various Iranian cities. Why is it that like the morning star they have vanished before rising and thus have made people lose all initiative and interest?<sup>347</sup>

Domestic trade, retail sales and much local wholesaling remained the province of Iranians, as did some of the trade with the Ottomans, with India, and in the Gulf.<sup>348</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Iranian merchants resisted foreign encroachment as adamantly as the Qajar state had balked at signing a commercial treaty with England or granting Russian consuls. The British consul K.E. Abbott reported on September 30, 1844 that

... a memorial was presented to His Majesty the Shah by the Traders and Manufacturers of Cashan praying for protection to their commerce which they represented as suffering in consequence of the introduction of European merchandize into their country.<sup>349</sup>

In the same year the merchants of Tabriz petitioned the crown prince to prohibit the import of European manufactures: "... on the ground principally of the ruin Persian manufactures are reduced to by

<sup>346</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 342-45.

<sup>347</sup> *Habl al-Matin*, May 18, 1906, in Issawi, *EHI*, 68.

<sup>348</sup> Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xx; Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 75; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 202.

<sup>349</sup> Abbott is quoted by Issawi, *EIII*, 258.

the constant and immense importation of foreign goods."<sup>350</sup> Both of these protests proved unsuccessful and the merchants' "combinations" at Tabriz and Kashan dissolved shortly after.<sup>351</sup> The waves of bankruptcies by Iranians dealing with Europeans in the 1830s and 1840s may have been in part a (personally costly) form of resistance.<sup>352</sup> Later in the century, as opposition to foreign imports became a lost cause, efforts focussed on defending banking activities. In Shiraz in 1892 Iranian merchants sought to avoid doing business with the British bank by setting up their own bank, capitalized with 4,000 shares of 25 tumans each.<sup>353</sup> Local bankers and moneylenders were not completely wiped out,<sup>354</sup> but this battle too was generally lost by the early 1900s. Merchant protests in 1900-1905 against the Belgian customs officials form part of the Constitutional Movement discussed in Chapter Five.

The alternative response was cooperation with European capital. In the 1830s and 1840s Iranian merchants had contact with Europeans primarily in places like Istanbul, importing and exporting products themselves to and from Iran. In the Gulf early in the century, "For the most part, British goods on entry into Persia became the property of Persians, who circulated them inside the country."<sup>355</sup> By the 1850s and 1860s, Europeans were working with Iranian intermediaries in Tabriz and elsewhere; as the French consul argued in 1869: "Our goods will be sold more readily if they are handled by native merchants, who deal directly with our trading firms..."<sup>356</sup> As merchants were downgraded to the role of middlemen, inequalities of compensation emerged. In Trabzon, European forwarding agents made 15 piastres on packages to or from Iran, while Iranians made as little as 2.5.<sup>357</sup> Some merchants traded under British or Russian protection; the very wealthy Tumanians, for example, became Russian citizens to gain access to Russia's markets.<sup>358</sup> Later in the century,

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, 76; Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 238.

<sup>352</sup> McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 44-45.

<sup>353</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 59.

<sup>354</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 569.

<sup>355</sup> Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 223. See also Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 73.

<sup>356</sup> "Dispatches to Minister of Foreign Affairs," in Issawi, *EHI*, 147. The British need for local merchants to distribute their goods is attested by Stevens in a letter to Sheil, February 26, 1851, in *ibid.*, 81.

<sup>357</sup> Gödel, *Über den pontischen Handelsweg*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 102.

<sup>358</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 45-46, 67.

"the Iranian merchants became for the greater part dependent on the European firms, not as equal partners, but as agents (*dallāl va dastkār*) and hired hands (*muzdūr*), whose best asset was their personal honesty."<sup>359</sup> At Bushire by 1900 all the merchants were either agents or brokers for foreign firms, trading mostly with India. In Shiraz and Isfahan practically no Iranians bought directly from Europe, but rather dealt with European trading companies in their cities. In some accounts Iranian merchants were referred to as *padu-yi dukkan* ("errand boy").<sup>360</sup>

Did most merchants benefit or suffer from the rise of foreign trade? While a few of the largest could compete directly in foreign markets and turn substantial profits, others were reduced to the status of middlemen and employees of foreign firms. Many were hurt by the decline of Iran's handicrafts as foreign imports flooded local markets, and still others by the failure of attempts to establish modern factories (both trends are discussed below). Guity Nashat claims that the merchants "benefited most from the country's trade with the outside world."<sup>361</sup> But as Ivanov and Enayat point out, the big merchants with foreign ties had very different interests and experiences from the small merchants, as contact with the West deepened the distance between them.<sup>362</sup> Such differences would further complicate the unstable and shifting positions of the fractions within the merchants class in such major upheavals as the Constitutional Revolution.

**Artisans.** The central economic importance of guilds and craft production has been underlined by Floor:

The traditional industries were much more important than any other industrial activity of a non-rural nature. The small workshop in which less than ten workers were employed in making and repairing products without the use of power-driven machinery was the predominant type of industrial establishment in Iran and remained so until the 1950s.<sup>363</sup>

The guild work process was carried on, as it had been since Safavid times, by masters who worked alongside journeymen and apprentices. The division of labor was not very developed: "An artisan would often make all components of an article himself and assemble these into the final product.

<sup>359</sup> Floor, "The Merchants (*tujjār*)," 133.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, 120, 122, 133.

<sup>361</sup> Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 70.

<sup>362</sup> Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 13; A. Enayat, "The Problem of Imperialism," 67.

<sup>363</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 5.

Moreover, production and sale often took place in the same establishment."<sup>364</sup> Iran's artisans were praised as "industrious and diligent" by Franklin in 1790, and as "able, ingenious, skillful and, in [their] way, even hard-working," by Gobineau in 1859.<sup>365</sup> Gobineau also observed that while they wouldn't work the long 12 to 15 hour days that European craftspeople would, they could copy European articles—tables, chairs, watches, locks—rather well.<sup>366</sup>

The guilds' leaders, often hereditary, were somewhat less powerful than earlier and had to be confirmed by the *kalantar* (chief urban official). Control over quality was exercised by the *darugha* (police prefect) or *muhtasib* (market overseer).<sup>367</sup> There were no minimum prices but "some of them controlled prices rather well"; it is of interest to note that in 1896 the Tehran butchers are said to have paid Kamran Mirza the huge sum of 200,000 tumans to maintain their monopoly of the meat market. The government could impose prices in times of emergency.<sup>368</sup> The guilds also paid more in taxes than the merchants, though the amounts still were not great: Gobineau claims they paid nothing or only a small sum, while an 1894 U.S. consular report states that the 170 members and 500 apprentices of the Tehran shoemakers guild, for example, paid only 600 tumans.<sup>369</sup> Mehrain says the guilds paid in money or corvée.<sup>370</sup>

In terms of the numbers of activities and workers involved, Isfahan is said to have had 200 guilds in the late nineteenth century, and Tehran 99 different types of activity in the 1920s.<sup>371</sup> Leading sectors in each city in 1924/25 included textiles and leather (1,938 shops with 2,371 masters, 2,503 skilled workers and 1,079 apprentices in Tehran; 1,354 masters in Isfahan), metal-working (756 shops with 822 masters, 769 skilled workers and 535 apprentices in Tehran; 1,183 masters in Isfahan), wood-working (574 shops with 500 masters, 506 skilled workers and 310 apprentices in

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>365</sup> W. Franklin, *Observations made on a tour from Bengal to Persia*, 147, cited by Hambly, "An Introduction to the Economic Organization," 77; Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 38.

<sup>366</sup> Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 38.

<sup>367</sup> W. M. Floor, "The Guilds in Iran—an Overview from the Earliest Beginnings till 1972," pp. 99-116 in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, volume 125, number 1 (1975), 109.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*; Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 69, based on V. A. Kosogovskii.

<sup>369</sup> Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 69, cites the 1894 U.S. report; Gobineau, *Trois ans en Asie*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 37.

<sup>370</sup> Mehrain, "Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 71.

<sup>371</sup> Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism," 24; Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 24 table 1.

Tehran; 220 masters in Isfahan), and building and ceramics (193 shops with 162 masters, 167 skilled workers and 43 apprentices in Tehran; 317 masters in Isfahan).<sup>372</sup> In the 1850s Abbott reported that Shiraz had 1,200 workshops and shops, many specializing in hardware and cutlery.<sup>373</sup> Aggregate data for urban Iran ca. 1910 suggest there were 20,000 weavers, 20,000 metal-workers, 3,900 in leather production and crafts, 300 printers, 300 wood cutters and 10-15,000 in other handicrafts.<sup>374</sup>

The principal trend in the handicraft sector is the decline of Iran's manufactures in the course of the nineteenth century. Abbott noted already in an 1849/50 report:

The manufactures have however rapidly declined for some time past in consequence of the trade with Europe which has gradually extended into every part of the kingdom to the detriment or ruin of many branches of native industry.<sup>375</sup>

Issawi cautions against exaggerating the extent of decline, arguing that it started later and went less far than elsewhere in the Middle East. He notes that cotton, wool and silk cloth worth 100,000 pounds sterling was exported in 1912/13 and that foreign trade stimulated the processing of products such as leather, silk, opium and henna.<sup>376</sup> But we have seen the rise of European imports in spite of the encouragement of the early Qajar shahs to use local cloth and other goods. Due to the lack of any tariff controls, European textiles accounted for two-thirds of total imports in 1850 and one-half of a much higher volume in 1900.<sup>377</sup>

If we analyze specific products and cities both the centrality of textiles and their decline undeniably emerge. Cotton handloom weaving was a major occupation in Kashan and Yazd in 1850; the latter city had 1,300 looms.<sup>378</sup> Exports of cotton manufactures from Tabriz amounted to 79,000 pounds sterling in 1848, and in the 1870s there is still evidence of significant internal consumption of Iranian fabrics among the wealthy.<sup>379</sup> Weavers in the Julfa district of Isfahan were producing 130-

<sup>372</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 12 tables 6 and 7.

<sup>373</sup> Abbott is cited by Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 197.

<sup>374</sup> See Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 5 table 3, and Issawi, *EHI*, 261, both of whom cite Abdullaev, *Pro-myshlennost...*, 199-212.

<sup>375</sup> Abbott's "Report on the Commerce of the South of Persia" is quoted by Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xvi.

<sup>376</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 17, 259.

<sup>377</sup> Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 238; Ellis, "Treaty Negotiations, 1836," in Issawi, *EHI*, 78-79; Bausani, *The Persians*, 169; Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 233.

<sup>378</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 197.

<sup>379</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 109; Jones, "Trade of Tabriz," in *ibid.*, 114.

140,000 sheets of linen and 25-30,000 pairs of socks annually in 1881.<sup>380</sup> Silk was another major textile product in nineteenth-century Iran, produced especially in Yazd (which had 300-350 silk looms and 1,800 "factories" employing 9,000 people in 1850), Kashan (with 448 silk looms in 1879), Mashhad (with 271 silk workshops in 1878-79) and Isfahan.<sup>381</sup> Forty-three thousand pounds sterling worth of silk textiles were exported from Tabriz in 1848.<sup>382</sup> Pakdaman judges that silk and cotton textiles began to decline in the 1850s, but serious decline can be dated even from 1800 to 1850, when Kashan's silk looms fell from 8,000 to 800, and Isfahan's from 1,250 to 250.<sup>383</sup> Blau found in 1858 that Iran's silk weavers were working for the home market only.<sup>384</sup> A third major handloomed textile was finely woven shawls made from raw wool hairs, which had been an item of domestic trade since at least 1800. The main center of their production was Kirman, where there were 2,000 shawl looms in a total population of 25,000 in 1850, producing 40-45,000 pounds sterling worth of shawls each year. Each loom occupied one man and two boys in tiring, repetitive work for up to 14 hours a day in unhealthy conditions. Since shawls could not be machine-made in Europe, and local authorities took protectionist measures against Kashmir's fine product, decline was staved off for a time. Percy Sykes in fact reported increases to 3,000 looms producing 60,000 pounds sterling of shawls at Kirman in the 1890s. When demand by the European upper classes slumped, Kashmir was severely affected by famine in 1877-79; Pakdaman dates Iran's decline in shawl exports from the 1870s, Dillon (supported by Sykes's figures) somewhat later.<sup>385</sup>

The downward trends in Iran's handicraft sector emerge even more clearly when the situation of specific cities is examined. Kirman and Mashhad weathered the destruction of their textile and fire-arms workshops to a degree by finding work for unemployed weavers in a new "industry"—

<sup>380</sup> I. P. Yarusiwn Ter Yovhaneanc, *Palmutiwn Nor Julayn u Aspahan* (New Julfa, 1881), extracts translated pp. 59-62 in Issawi, *EHI*, 60.

<sup>381</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 197; Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 325; Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xvi; Steensgaard and Inalcik, "Ḥārīr," 210; Pakdaman, "Preface," 130.

<sup>382</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 109.

<sup>383</sup> Pakdaman, "Preface," 130; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 198.

<sup>384</sup> Blau is cited by Steensgaard and Inalcik, "Ḥārīr," 210.

<sup>385</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 273-79 on shawls in Kirman generally; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 199, based on the newspaper account in *Ruznameh-i Vaqa'i-i Ittifaqiyya* (Tehran), number 182, July 26, 1854, for protectionism against Kashmir; Pakdaman, "Preface," 130, on decline.

carpet manufacturing (see below).<sup>386</sup> Yazd, like these two cities a more isolated, difficult point to reach, also survived, but saw its exports shift from woven silk to opium, carpets, raw cotton and wool. Gilbar argues that it was less affected because "out of several hundred shops only forty or fifty [!] traded in foreign, mainly Indian goods."<sup>387</sup> The artisans of Tabriz, so close to the imports of the world market, were more seriously undermined.<sup>388</sup> Other cities' craftspeople were totally decimated. As British piece goods took over the southern textile market by 1860-70, Shiraz's weaving establishments fell in number from 500 in 1800 to 10 (producing coarse fabrics) by 1857.<sup>389</sup> Cities like Kashan, which had depended primarily on silk and cotton weaving for generations, were thoroughly depressed: "Flandin, who visited Kāshān in 1840, reports that the import of British materials had destroyed the large factories of Kāshān."<sup>390</sup> Isfahan suffered a particularly precipitous drop in its handicraft production. In the silk weavers guild, the number of workshops declined steadily from 1,250 in the 1820s, to 486 in the 1840s, 240 in the early 1850s and 12 in the late 1870s.<sup>391</sup> This was in part due to shifting tastes for European imports at the Qajar court. Curzon in the 1890s said that Isfahan had become a consumer of "manufactured cotton goods, almost wholly from Manchester and Glasgow."<sup>392</sup> The collapse of hand-crafted textiles in turn affected the many widows who lived by spinning thread, and other guilds, notably dyers, carders and workers in the bleaching houses all of whom "have mostly disappeared." As the economic base contracted, the demand for hat-making, boot-making and engraving went slack, and artisans and merchants left the city. The chronicler Mirza Husayn found in 1877 that "most of the turners of Isfahan are now working in Tehran," and half the city's moneylenders now lived in Tehran, Tabriz and other cities.<sup>393</sup>

<sup>386</sup> Pakdaman, "Preface," 130; Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 325, citing Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, 245.

<sup>387</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 198; Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 219 note 12.

<sup>388</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 198.

<sup>389</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 416 note 23; Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 6, based on the traveller John Piggot, *Persia, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1874), 221.

<sup>390</sup> Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 325.

<sup>391</sup> Mirza Husayn, *Jughrafiya-yi Isfahan* [Geography of Isfahan] (Tehran, 1342/1963), extracts translated pp. 279-282 in Issawi, *EHI*, 281.

<sup>392</sup> Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, 41, cited by Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 325.

<sup>393</sup> Mirza Husayn, *Jughrafiya-yi Isfahan*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 279-81.

In surveying the impact of Iran's economic integration with the world-system on its artisans, one can find a few cases of specific crafts holding their own. The coppersmiths maintained themselves, for example, building new bazaar facilities in Kashan around the 1870s.<sup>394</sup> A great many other guilds were undoubtedly irreplaceable in their own spheres of work: silver, gold, tin, steel and iron workers, potters, masons, carpenters and others must have retained their share of work. The number of such guilds was large, but their members were not that numerous. For a majority of Iran's urban artisans, and especially the large numbers who had engaged in textiles in the first half of the century, the impact either reduced their markets and incomes or pushed them out of work altogether, making them candidates for new craft and factory industries, migration to Russia, or descent into the urban marginal classes.

**"Traditional" industries.** One response to the decline of artisanal production was an incipient transition to larger-scale factory-type worksites that yet remained in many ways artisanal in their labor process. In leather-working, for example, a concentration of many guild workshops of 8-10 workers into a few larger "factories" employing up to 40-50 workers can be observed: between 1909 and 1912, according to Sobotsinskii, Hamadan's 400 small leather workshops declined to 300, and Mashhad's 200 to 50.<sup>395</sup> Thus Floor counts some 3,000 workers engaged in "leather production" in Iran ca. 1900, versus only 900 in "leather crafts." He also notes that other, similar establishments existed for the preparation of opium and henna, and in Tabriz in 1922 smaller units in tobacco processing (300 workers at 30 sites), dyeing factories (200 workers at 40 sites), fruit-juice making (100 workers at 20 sites), soap-making (60 workers at 10 sites), cigarette making (50 workers at 5 sites), iron and gypsum (50 workers at 5 sites), pottery making (50 workers at 5 sites), powder-making (30 workers at 3 sites) and brick-making (30 workers at 5 sites).<sup>396</sup>

Towering above these varied activities was the carpet industry, which affords the best example of changes in the organization of production under the Western impact. Until the nineteenth century

<sup>394</sup> Afshari, "The *Pishivārān* and Merchants," 135, 153 note 5.

<sup>395</sup> Sobotsinskii, *Persiya*, 228-29, is cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 259 note 6.

<sup>396</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 5 table 3, 8 table 4.

carpet-making had generally been a tribal or village craft for domestic use (and as a form of personal savings against hard times), or a male, urban craft destined for consumption by the Iranian elite. By mid-century carpets were being collected and exported from Tabriz to Europe via Istanbul. As demand increased, merchants began to organize urban and rural production, and European companies entered the scene. British, Italian, Swiss, American and other Western firms had much of the market in hand by 1900, though Iran's merchants certainly remained active: *Habl al-Matin* complained in 1906 that "two-thirds of the [carpet trade] is in the hands of Christian merchants."<sup>397</sup>

The earliest form of production was on a rural cottage basis, performed by women and children in villages. This arrangement both eased underemployment in agriculture, and by keeping the peasant workforce on the land, cheapened the costs of producing carpets.<sup>398</sup> MacLean's report of 1904 stated that most of the work was still done in this way,<sup>399</sup> but it was also increasingly supplemented by urban putting-out systems in towns such as Sultanabad (Arak), Kirman and elsewhere. In the cities, local weavers—both male master artisans and women—would pick up the materials (yarns) from European firms, work on looms at home or in shops, and then return the finished carpet to a central warehouse for inspection, on a contract basis.<sup>400</sup> Sultanabad's 40 looms in 1875 became 1200 by 1894, with 1500 more in nearby villages. Kirman, with few looms until 1890, had 1000 by 1900 and 4000 by 1914.<sup>401</sup> The carpet industry absorbed some of the unemployed silk and cotton textile weavers of Isfahan, Mashhad and Kashan in the same period from 1880 to 1910.<sup>402</sup>

Around the turn of the twentieth century the industry showed signs of another transition toward small-scale factory production, like leather and other crafts. A report on Tabriz in 1899 states that "until recently" there were no carpet factories in Azerbaijan, as the work was done at home by women. Abdullaev notes several establishments of up to 100 workers, and a "factory" (a large

<sup>397</sup> *Habl al-Matin*, May 18, 1906, in Issawi, *EHI*, 68. See Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 285-87 for the nineteenth-century background of carpets in Iran, based in part on A. Cecil Edwards, *The Persian Carpet. A Survey of the Carpet-Weaving Industry of Persia* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., Limited, 1967 [1953]).

<sup>398</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 468-75; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 590 note 87.

<sup>399</sup> MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 302-303.

<sup>400</sup> McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 41; Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 55.

<sup>401</sup> Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 287-91, citing Edwards, *A Survey*, 136.

<sup>402</sup> Pakdaman, "Preface," 130.

workshop, really) employing the huge number of 1,500 opened in 1899.<sup>403</sup> Floor notes that these factories had a low level of mechanization and relied instead on intensive manual labor; he considers them an extension of cottage industry, representing "an intermediate stage of industrialization."<sup>404</sup> Carpet exports rose swiftly as a result of these changes in production and demand from 75,000 pounds sterling in the early 1870s and 90-100,000 pounds in 1889, to 500,000 pounds by 1900 and one million in 1914. By then carpets comprised one-eighth of Iran's total trade and its single largest export item (to be surpassed soon by oil).<sup>405</sup>

The number of workers involved in carpet making was estimated in 1910 at 65,000, far more than in any other craft or industrial type of production.<sup>406</sup> Working conditions seem to have ranged from bad to atrocious. A 1928 article in the newspaper *Shafaq-e Sorkh* was entitled "The Kirman carpet or the extermination of the young generation of that province": "The author of the article stated that wages were not enough to live on. The workers he described as a collection of famished, pale, emaciated and deformed beings."<sup>407</sup> Many workers became crippled for life:

Apart from having to work in subterranean, often cave-like, badly lit, cold, humid, unventilated areas, the workers were seated in such a way that they were always sitting stooped. This position was often conducive to "permanent deformities of the arms and legs, and irreparable damage to general health".<sup>408</sup>

Floor quotes from a 1921 missionary's report:

In the streets of Kerman the Reverend Boyland observed "one is constantly reminded of the iniquity of this child-labour by seeing deformed and stunted women, and occasionally men who are no longer able to work, as their hands are often deformed as well, and are reduced to beggary".<sup>409</sup>

Young women from the industry often died in childbirth. When sick or injured, the workers were not paid or compensated, nor were their families in case of their death.<sup>410</sup> Efforts by local authorities to legislate minimum standards in 1913 were met by an employers' strike. In 1923 regulations

<sup>403</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 297-300; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 7.

<sup>404</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 7.

<sup>405</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 302; Issawi, "Iranian Trade, 1800-1914," 234.

<sup>406</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 5 table 3, and Issawi, *EHI*, 261, both citing Abdullaev.

<sup>407</sup> Willem Floor, *Labour Unions, Law and Conditions in Iran (1900-1941)*, Occasional Papers Series number 26 (University of Durham, England: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1985), 90-91.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, citing British missionaries from 1921 and 1924.

<sup>409</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 101-102.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*

were again decreed there requiring an eight-hour day, Fridays off, adequate lighting and air quality, and setting minimum ages of eight for boys and 18 for women, but the owners again protested and Tehran cancelled the orders.<sup>411</sup> These early members of Iran's working class lived, labored and died in very harsh conditions indeed.

**Modern industry and factories.** The earliest mention of factory production in Iran I have seen dates from 1841, referring to "the existence of various ordinance factories in Tabriz (mentioned by George Fowler in 1841), set up by a Persian who had been sent to Europe to study the subject," apparently by Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza, who, since he died in 1833, must have conceived the idea even earlier.<sup>412</sup> The reforming prime minister Amir Kabir sent six artisans to Russia in 1851 to study paper, glass, iron-casting, sugar-refining, carpentry and wheel-making; two Kashan silk weavers were sent to Istanbul, and an envoy travelled to Austria to acquire tools and hire technicians for a flannel factory.<sup>413</sup> After his death, several of these projects were started up in Iran in the 1850s and 1860s both by the government and by private individuals:

In the capital, factories for the production of paper, candles, glass, gunpowder and percussion caps were established, and in Isfahān a linen-weaving factory, a paper-mill and a modern arsenal were constructed, and in Qumm a sugar-refining plant was founded by the government.<sup>414</sup>

A three or four story cotton-spinning factory was built outside Tehran in 1859 with 30,000 spindles and a 25-horse power engine. It cost 130,000 pounds sterling to build and never operated at full capacity, employing about 150 people. In 1864 Thomson reported that it was unprofitable and produced poor quality cotton. The paper, glass and candle works had failed by 1864.<sup>415</sup> The gunpowder factory and a rifle factory established at Tehran in 1850 that produced 1000 rifles a month were the only exceptions to the record of early failures.<sup>416</sup>

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 88-90.

<sup>412</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 169.

<sup>413</sup> John H. Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer of the Nineteenth Century: An Analysis of Amir Kabir's Reforms," pp. 85-103 in *Iranian Studies*, volume III, number 2 (Spring-Summer 1971), 91.

<sup>414</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 200.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, 199-200; Issawi, *EHI*, 261; Feridun Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir va Iran* [Amir Kabir and Iran], third edition (Tehran: Khwarazmi, 1348/1969), extracts translated pp. 292-297 in Issawi, *EHI*.

<sup>416</sup> Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-i Shayagan*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 308-309.

At a meeting between the shah and a group of merchants in 1893, Amin al-Zarb pointed out the lack of industry in Iran and the country's dependence on the West's manufactures: "...what do we have for manufacturies and industries that we can say: we don't want the European commodities?"<sup>417</sup> In the next two decades a second wave of mostly privately-owned Iranian and foreign factories would be set up and struggle to survive. Table 4.14 lists the principal factories and workshops operated by Iranians from the late 1880s to 1914.

Table 4.14  
Characteristics of Factories and Workshops  
Owned by Iranians in late Qajar Times

Name of Establishment	Year Established	Place	Number	Workers
Amin al-Zarb's silk-spinning factory	1880s	Rasht	1	150
Cotton-ginning workshops	1912-15	Mazandaran/Khurasan	9	144
Paper factory	1890s	Tehran	1	60
Spinning factory	1895?	Tabriz	1	45
Electricity plants	early 1900s	Tabriz/Mashhad/Tehran	3	45
Amin al-Zarb's glass works	1887/88	Tehran	1	20
Soap factory	1910	Tehran	1	20
Amin al-Zarb's brickworks	early 1900s	Tehran	1	20
Cartridge factory	1861/62?	Tehran	1	10
Brewery	ca. 1910	Tehran	1	10
Totals			20	524

Sources: This table, based on Abdullaev, is produced in Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 98 table 2. I have added the data on year established, from Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-i Shayagan*, 93-96; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 9 table 5; Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 737.

Amin al-Zarb's silk-cord factory at Rasht was set up in the mid-1880s and was fairly profitable, grossing 10,000 tumans a year (which seems a small sum), and producing a 50 percent net profit. Sani' al-Daula and Hajj Muhammad Taqi Shahrudi's modern rope-spinning plant had to close down due to foreign competition, as did Amin al-Daula's sugarcane refinery, built in 1899, due to Russian dumping of cheap sugar in Iran.<sup>418</sup> Hajj Mu'in al-Tujjar Bushihri's silk-spinning factory at Rasht closed down in 1903, lying idle for twenty years until it was reopened.<sup>419</sup> Electric power plants

<sup>417</sup> Cited by Floor, "The Merchants (*tujjār*)," 131.

<sup>418</sup> Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 737; Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 326.

<sup>419</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 16.

were successfully operated in Tehran, Mashhad, Tabriz and Rasht in the early 1900s; likewise a Tabriz spinning mill in 1908/9 and the Tehran soap factory in 1910 made it off the ground.<sup>420</sup>

These efforts, with a few exceptions, were not on the whole very productive. Obstacles were posed by the expense and formidable difficulties of transporting equipment and finished products, the cost of fuel and scarcity of energy resources, a lack of skilled personnel, the small size of the internal market and the failure of the state to protect local industry against often fierce foreign competition.<sup>421</sup> A shortage of investable capital played a role as well—merchants, the most likely source of funds, stuck to trade or invested their profits in land. A list of clients of the Russian Bank showed 813 persons in trade or finance in 1908 versus only 6 in industry, and 1,060 versus 9 in 1909.<sup>422</sup> Nevertheless, considerable efforts were made prior to 1914, and in a few cases—mostly processing of agricultural products such as cotton and silk—these fledgling industries did manage to survive.

More striking successes in modern-type factories were registered by foreigners. The largest “industrial” concerns in Iran by far were the British oil industry with 7-8,000 workers and the Russian Caspian fisheries, with 4-5,000.<sup>423</sup> Table 4.15 lists the other foreign-owned factories and workshops in late Qajar times. Russian cotton-ginning plants were more numerous and better equipped with oil-run motors, than their Iranian counterparts. Russians also monopolized oil-refining (with Baku crude) and dominated northern forestry and road-building. Germans were active too, with a brickworks, steam mill, sawmill, cartridge factory, carpet factory and montage (construction) facility. As in foreign trade, by 1914, Europeans were in a fairly commanding position in the modern industrial sector, small as it was in comparison with the rest of the economy.

**Working class.** Table 4.16 helps us survey the composition of the Iranian working class in the broad sense—including its traditional sectors such as carpet weavers and artisans as well as the modern factory, industrial and construction settings—in the period up to about 1914. The

<sup>420</sup> Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-i Shayagan*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 309-310.

<sup>421</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 260; Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, 41; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 9.

<sup>422</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 67.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

Table 4.15  
 Characteristics of Foreign-Owned Factories  
 and Workshops in Late Qajar Times

Type of Establishment	Year Established	Place	Number	Nationality	Workers
Sugar factory	1895/96	Kahrizak	1	Belgian	300
Carpet factory	ca. 1910	Tabriz	1	German	100
Match factory	1890/91	Tehran	1	Russian	50
Petroleum refineries	1890s	Anzali/Astara	5	Russian	150
Cotton-ginning plants	after 1900	Mazandaran/Khurasan	17	Russian	272
Construction workshop		Azarbaijan	1	Russian	30
Silk-spinning factory	1890s	Barekadeh	1	Russian	20
Montage workshop	1910	Tabriz	1	German	20
Electrical plant	1900-10?	Anzali	2	Russian	30
Brickworks	1913/14	Urumiya	1	German	20
Olive oil press	1895	Rudbar	1	Russian	20
Tobacco factory	after 1900	Mashhad	1	Russian	20
Brewery	after 1900	Urumiya	1	Russian	15
Ice plant		Anzali	1	Russian	10
Steam mills	ca. 1910	Qazvin/Urumiya	2	Russian/German	20
Saw mills	ca. 1910	Gilan/Urumiya	3	Russian/German	40
Cartridge factory	ca. 1910	Isfahan	1	German	15
Totals			41		1,132

Sources: This table, based on Abdullaev, is produced in Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 99 table 3. I have added the data on year established, from Jamalzadeh, *Ganj-i Shayagan*, 93-96; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 9 table 5; Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 65-66.

preponderance of traditional industry is underlined by this table—some 120,000 out of 145,000 workers, roughly 83 percent of the total, fall into this category. Carpet weaving alone accounts for almost one-half of the total, and only a fraction of Iran's 65,000 carpet weavers can be considered urban working class or labored in factory settings. Only about eight percent of the total worked in "modern" industry—some 10,850 workers, of whom the vast majority were in the British-owned oil sector or the Russian-owned Caspian fisheries. Only 1,650 workers are found in factories, almost all of them in small to medium units of 5 to 30 workers, with two-thirds (1,132 workers) in foreign-owned factories, as opposed to one-third (524) in Iranian-owned establishments. Another 200 workers were in mining. The "service sector" accounts for 12,000 people (about nine percent of the total), but of these 5,000 were servants. Sizable contingents also worked as porters and dockers, and in road construction, both mostly in the north. Another 300 Iranians did mostly skilled work in

**Table 4.16**  
**The Iranian Working Class, ca. 1914**

Sector	Number of Workers
<b>Modern Industry</b>	
Oil Industry (APOC)	6,000
Fisheries (Russian)	3,000
Factories	1,650
Mining	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,850</b>
<b>Service Sector</b>	
Servants	5,000
Porters and Dockers	4,000
Railroad/Road Construction	3,300
Printers	300
Electrical Workers	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,700</b>
<b>Traditional Industry/Crafts</b>	
Carpet-weaving	65,000
Weaving	20,000
Metal-working Crafts	20,000
Leather Production and Crafts	3,900
Other Handicrafts	10-15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>118,900-123,900</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>142,450-147,450</b>
Sources: Floor, <i>Industrialization in Iran</i> , 5 table 3, 29 table 10; Issawi, <i>EHI</i> , 261; Ashraf, <i>Mavane'-i Tarikhi</i> , 98 table 2, 99 table 3; Floor, <i>Labour Unions</i> , 43 table 3.	

printing. The table shows above all the very modest size of the modern, industrial working class at this time, and the domination of foreign capital within this sector.

The origins of this early working class lie in various places. The hard-hit artisanal sector provided some—perhaps most—of Iran's first skilled industrial workers.<sup>424</sup> Unskilled workers, who

<sup>424</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 49.

constituted a majority of all workers, came from two sources—the urban poor and unemployed (including unemployed artisans), and peasants who migrated in search of work, not only as seasonal agricultural labor, but also in construction and on road projects.<sup>425</sup> Rabino reports for example that each year 25,000 peasants went from Khalkhal to Rasht to find work, many of whom must have been employed in the urban sector.<sup>426</sup> Abdullaev notes that some peasants were part-time industrial workers, and vice versa:

... part of the working class was occupied in industry only seasonally (e.g., in sugar refining and fishing). Thus, according to P. Rittikh, during the period of sugar refining (*varka*), which lasted two months, the Belgian factory in Kahrizeke engaged up to three hundred workers. The seasonal character of work in some branches impeded the formation of a regular cadre of workers.<sup>427</sup>

Employment in the oil industry rose rapidly at the end of our period, from 2,724 Iranians (plus 316 Indians, 292 others and 80 Europeans) in 1910 to 5,488 Iranians (plus 2,148 Indians, 750 others and 128 Europeans) in 1914.<sup>428</sup> Unskilled labor was provided mostly by Iranian peasants from the south and to a certain extent by Bakhtiari and Arab tribesmen. The villages around Isfahan sent 1,500 landless workers to the Gulf area, who stayed in touch with their families remaining in agriculture. Tribal labor was often secured by foremen who hired work gangs in the areas surrounding the oil fields and other installations. Labor was difficult to attract and keep despite the hardship that drove these early workers to the industry in the first place.<sup>429</sup>

Working conditions were not good. Little labor law existed before 1914, though in that year Iran joined the International Labor Organization as one of its first members. In August 1904 Muzaffar al-Din Shah decreed that Muslim women were not to work in factories owned by non-Muslims—boys aged 10-12 were recommended instead. The decree was apparently not observed.<sup>430</sup> Floor's study of labor conditions in this period concludes overall that "it is a bleak picture of the lot of the worker with regard to hours, health conditions, wages and social conditions." A 10 to 12

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, 50; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 576.

<sup>426</sup> Cited by Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 576.

<sup>427</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 49.

<sup>428</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 43 table 3.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, 28; Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 49.

<sup>430</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 82.

hour work day was usual, with up to 16 hours possible. Printers won the eight-hour day in 1918, while APOC's workers also did only eight hours. In certain difficult and skilled jobs, the work day was shorter: tending the oven in the faience (ceramics) industry was a two-hour shift, potters worked four to five hours a day. If the frequent Islamic holidays are taken into account it is possible that the "average working week could in many cases be as short as 40 hours." In terms of occupational safety and health, "Normal working conditions in Iranian industry were very bad. This was true for children as well as adults." Many workers were undernourished to begin with, or suffered from such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis and eye infections when they didn't die of typhoid and small pox.<sup>431</sup> In factories they were exposed to

... dust, steam, down and dirt, which led to all kinds of respiratory troubles. The working areas often were badly heated and very humid, and it was not exceptional to see little children at work in dark, humid holes, half-naked, with their feet in water under the constant supervision of the foreman or employer.<sup>432</sup>

Factories usually had no washing room, toilets, eating facilities, and often inadequate or poor running water, if any.<sup>433</sup> The horrific situation in the carpet sector has been presented above. In the textile industry, Floor concludes "Working conditions continued to be bad, child labour was still the rule, wages were pitiful, children and women suffered from their working conditions and nothing changed."<sup>434</sup> Workers might be paid a fixed wage or on a piece rate basis. Textile workers earned 1 1/2 - 3 krans (15-30¢) a day for men, 1/2 - 1 kran for women, and 1/2 kran for children.<sup>435</sup> In the foreign-owned sector wages were higher, but wage differentials existed between Iranian and Russian fishery workers with the former making two krans a day, the latter five; and in the lumber industry where Iranians made 3-5 krans a day and Russians 10.<sup>436</sup> In the British oil industry a four-tiered wage system prevailed in the 1920s: unskilled workers made 10-15 tumans (\$10-15) a month, skilled Iranian labor 14-20, Indians "much more," and English management and staff 500-1500

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, 99, 100, 115 note 4, 116 note 9.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 92-93.

<sup>435</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 41.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

tumans a month. Wages dropped 33-50 percent between 1924 and 1929. Moreover, prior to 1925, "Iranians workers were forced to buy their necessities of life in shops owned by Sheikh Khaz'al [the ruler of Khuzistan]. Farmers bringing foodstuffs into Abadan either had to sell these to his shops or pay extra taxes on them."<sup>437</sup>

The first unions were organized in 1906, and the history of their organization and strikes is bound up with the Constitutional Movement, but can be briefly sketched here. Guilds formed councils in 1906 in Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Kirman and Kirmanshah, generally with members representing each guild.<sup>438</sup> Iran's first trade union was formed at the Kucheki printing shop in Tehran, in 1906 or 1907. The printers, relatively well-paid and highly educated, were politically militant; in 1911 they created a national printers' union.<sup>439</sup> In 1907-8 a wave of unions emerged amidst much strike activity. Floor documents the organization of dockers and boatmen at Anzali, servants at Rasht, shoemakers, tramway officials and droshki-drivers in Tehran, printers at Isfahan, and possibly carpet weavers in Kirman.<sup>440</sup> He describes the first strike, by the Anzali boatmen against the Russian fisheries concessionaire, Liazonov, in 1906-7; this was followed in 1907 by strikes of telegraphists (in Tabriz and Tehran), dockers (Anzali), printers (Tehran), electricity workers (Tehran) and tramway workers (Tehran), and in 1908 by 150 workers at three Tabriz tanneries.<sup>441</sup> Few unions formed in the south. After 1909 the movement suffered setbacks, and it was crushed along with the Constitutional Revolution in 1911.<sup>442</sup>

A second wave of unionization and strikes occurred 1918-23. The bakery workers organized in the famine winter of 1917-18, while printers, telegraphists and postal workers re-formed their unions. Trade unions grew from two in 1918 to ten in 1920, and claimed 20,000 members by the end of 1921, 8,000 in Tehran. There were unions of porters and boatmen at Anzali; printers, hatters, leatherworkers and others at Rasht; teachers at Tabriz. In 1921-22 there were successful strikes by

<sup>437</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 112, 104.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 9, 11, 62 note 2.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 63-64 note 20.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 6-7, 62 note 10, 63 note 13.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 11.

weavers and textile workers, bakers, printers, teachers, postal officials, dock workers and mercers.<sup>443</sup> Indian and Iranian oil workers struck at APOC in 1920, 1922 and 1924, forming their first union in 1925. Like the first wave in 1911, this second wave was repressed, this time when Reza Shah Pahlavi came to power in 1925.<sup>444</sup> The point however has been made that Iran's working class made numerous attempts to organize unions and conduct strikes in the periods from 1906 to 1909 and 1917-24.

A final vector in the formation of the Iranian working class leads to Russia and back. Migrations of Iranians to Russia in search of seasonal work can be traced to at least 1855, picked up after the great famine of 1869-72, and swelled to a vigorous stream in the period from the 1890s to 1914.<sup>445</sup> The numbers involved are truly staggering. Between 1900 and 1913, 1,765,000 people left Iran and 1,412,000 returned; some 200-300,000 migrated each year. Hakimian, who has done the most detailed study, estimates that 100,000 Iranians lived in Russia in 1900, and by 1913 between 450,000 and 500,000 were permanent residents. Another 100-200,000 temporary workers came each year.<sup>446</sup> Most of those who went seem to have been peasants in Iran, but evidence exists of unemployed craftspeople, merchants and unskilled laborers migrating as well.<sup>447</sup> Most of the migrants were Azeri Turkish speakers from Azerbaijan. So many Azerbaijanis left Iran that the imaginary traveller of the *Siyahatnameh-i Ibrahim Baig* noted of that province: "Spotting few adult males in sight, he paused to exclaim, "it seems as if one had entered a city of women!" "<sup>448</sup>

Once in Russia a large number of the migrants engaged in agricultural work in the Caucasus—in the cotton fields near Tiflis, on farms around Elizavetpol, and elsewhere.<sup>449</sup> A great many others, however, worked in the cities. Gordon wrote in 1896: "Baku swarms with Persians. They are seen everywhere—as shopkeepers, mechanics, masons, carpenters, coachmen, carters, and laborers all in a

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-26.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 23, 28-32.

<sup>445</sup> Hakimian, "Wage Labor and Migration," 443, 444, 459 notes 3 and 4.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 445, 447; Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 152-53.

<sup>447</sup> Hakimian, "Wage Labor and Migration," 448, 451, 452.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, 457, citing Zain al-'Abedin Maragheh-i, *Siyahatnameh-i Ibrahim Baig* [The Travel Memoirs of Ibrahim Beg] (Tehran, 1974), 28.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, 447-50.

bustle of business, so different from Persians at home."<sup>450</sup> These urban workers became an Iranian working class formed inside Russia. In Tiflis, Iranians were considered the best masons (key to the construction industry); in Baku, the porters came from Khalkhal and Ardabil; Iranians made roads and railways, including 20,000 who built the Tiflis to Kars line in the 1890s. A large number worked in the heavy industrial sector as well. In the oil industry at Baku, in 1893, 11 percent of 7,000 workers (ca. 770) were Iranian; in 1903, 22.2 percent of 23,500 (ca. 5,217); by 1915, 29.1 percent of ca. 60,800 (=13,500). And at Elizavetpol 27.5 percent of permanent workers in the copper smelting plant of Kedabek were Iranians.<sup>451</sup> They could be found as far into Russia as the coal mines of the Don, where 118 Iranians went to work in 1915.<sup>452</sup> Working conditions were hard and wages low. Unskilled Iranians earned 60-70 kopeks a day in 1904, 20 less than unskilled Russians.

Persian dock workers in Baku worked between 15 and 18 hours a day—sometimes even at night—ate badly, and many slept under trees and in gardens. According to a different source, the fact that most Persians of Tiflis shared one room among three or four people hampered efforts to contain the periodic incidence of cholera in the town.<sup>453</sup>

Nevertheless, workers remitted or brought considerable sums back home to their families in Iran: 1.8 million rubles in 1904, three million in 1909.<sup>454</sup> The significance of the presence of these workers in turn-of-the-century Russia, where social democratic and other revolutionary ideas and organizations abounded, will be considered below in our discussion of urban values and attitudes.

To conclude this section on the Iranian working class, we have seen that it was quite small, but politically active; that it had diverse origins (both peasant and urban workers within Iran); and that a large section of it was formed outside the country in Russia. Given foreign control of much of Iran's industrial sector, it can be said that Iran's working class, however small in this period, was formed before its capitalist class, or at least, that it had developed to a far greater degree than the internal capitalist class by 1914. Much of it, however, remained tied to the larger agricultural sector—the early oil workers, the seasonal agro-industrial workers, and the migrants who constantly

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, citing Gordon, *Persia Revisited*, 8.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>452</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 52.

<sup>453</sup> Hakimian, "Wage Labor and Migration," 450.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, 454.

journeyed back from Russia. This kept many of its members in two modes of production, at least mentally, and while it may have radicalized the villages somewhat, in converse fashion it also may have conservatized the working class, or some portion of it.

#### Urban lower and marginal classes.

Analytically the urban lower classes shade off at the margins into the classes above them. Servants, day laborers and petty vendors can simply be seen as occupying the lowest rungs of the working class, artisans or even merchants. But there were groups who lived closer to—or below—the margin of subsistence in urban society. Their existence is attested to by Abdullaev:

Travellers' accounts abound in material showing that the streets and bazaars of Iranian towns, especially the large commercial centers, were overcrowded with poor and unemployed persons, ready to sell their labor for a piece of bread.<sup>455</sup>

Some idea of their extent can be gathered from Ter Yovhaneanc's estimate that at Julfa in 1881 "not less than fifty or sixty households" out of 371 (i.e. 13-16 percent) were "poor and needy, who live in misery and woeful affliction," this despite the fact that housing was sometimes available for free in Julfa and provisions were cheap.<sup>456</sup> In identifying specific groups of the urban poor, we may begin with the petty vendors, peddlers and haulers: "A donkey, a cart, or even a full tray were all beyond the means of a number of people who kept themselves alive on the margins of the bazaar economy by periodic engagement in menial labor."<sup>457</sup> Certain day laborers, including poorly-paid and infrequently employed ditch diggers, water sellers, porters and others may be included. At Tabriz in 1922, 5,325 people fell into this category.<sup>458</sup> There were also large numbers of unemployed people—artisans out of work, older laborers, the injured, ill and others who had given up hope of finding work. The unemployed (for some reason—perhaps a sign of the latter's low status—lumped together with servants) numbered 30,000 at Tabriz in 1922. They formed a "Union of the Unemployed Workers of Gilan" with boatmen and porters at Anzali in May 1923.<sup>459</sup> Many people lived as beggars on the streets.<sup>460</sup> The *lutis* were a group which drew on several urban classes

<sup>455</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 50.

<sup>456</sup> Ter Yovhaneanc, *Patmutiwm*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 60.

<sup>457</sup> Afshari, "The *Pishivarān* and Merchants," 136.

<sup>458</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 13 note 3.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, 7; Floor, *Labour Unions*, 24; Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 156.

including the poor and marginal:

These were local associations, whose objects were the preservation of public morality in the district to which they belonged, the protection of the district from robbers, to which end they would patrol the district at night, and the education of the orphans and poor children of the district. They caused levies to be made on the rich people of the district and distributed the proceeds to the poor. They had a gild organization. Only persons of good character were admitted.<sup>461</sup>

On the other hand, Keddie describes them as "armed popular toughs," and Lambton notes that "these associations of *lūtīs* also frequently degenerated into bands of hooligans, and as such would levy heavy toll upon the people of the quarter in which they were."<sup>462</sup>

There is some debate in the literature regarding the standard of living of the poor. Amanat has suggested that the "poorer classes" and the "average woman in Tabriz or even in Isfahan" could purchase European-made clothing more cheaply than Iranian-made products.<sup>463</sup> One recalls also Malcolm's remark from the early 1800s: "... among the other classes, though few are rich, hardly any are in actual want."<sup>464</sup> But these observations are undoubtedly more applicable to the working class, artisans and other strata above the truly marginal population described here, and the situation probably deteriorated even among the former groups in the course of the nineteenth century. The British consul in Tabriz reported in 1897:

The prices of the prime necessities of life have increased by bounds since my last report, and at the death of the late Shah [in 1896], the lower classes in Tabreez were at starvation point.... Their wants are few, a little "sangak", a native bread, and a bit of cheese will satisfy them, but their power to procure these must be decreasing day by day.<sup>465</sup>

Olson believes that the peasantry and urban poor suffered a deterioration in their situations in the 1870s and early 1880s, and Issawi, that "even in normal times, the mass of Iranians lived at a very low level."<sup>466</sup> We shall find further support for this argument below when we look at price trends in Qajar Iran.

<sup>460</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 148.

<sup>461</sup> Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia*, 18-19.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 148.

<sup>463</sup> Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xv.

<sup>464</sup> Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), II, 353, cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 137.

<sup>465</sup> Cited in Issawi, *EHI*, 41.

<sup>466</sup> Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 187; Issawi, *EHI*, 22.

**The ulama and the intelligentsia.** Two further important groups in urban society were the ulama and the emerging intelligentsia. The ulama lived, as in the past, by collecting one-half of the *khums* tax as "the share of the imam," and by serving as religious leaders, judges, educators, and notaries of commercial contracts in the bazaar, where they were sometimes guild leaders as well.<sup>467</sup> As we have seen, *vaqf* land had shrunk in extent since 1722, but it still existed and supported some ulama. Others, as we have seen, became landowners. A particularly wealthy 'alim might combine urban and rural holdings. Such was Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Shaf'i Hujjat al-Islam, who in the first half of the nineteenth century accumulated 400 caravansarais, 2,000 shops and many villages in the Isfahan area.<sup>468</sup> Some leading positions, such as shaykh al-Islam (the highest religious official of a city) and imam jum'eh (Friday prayer leader), like the more middle-rank qazis (judges) received stipends from the state.<sup>469</sup> The most learned and respected ulama attained the title of mujtahid and were more independent of the state. The number of mujtahids grew from less than a dozen in the whole first half of the nineteenth century to at least 175 from 1848 to 1888, a development which undermined somewhat their potential for cohesive institutional action and fostered competition for control of offices, *vaqfs* and schools—"the involvement of the '*ulamā*' in pursuit of personal interests and material gain became extremely common."<sup>470</sup> Keddie notes: "There is no doubt that among the attractions of the *ulama* career line was the possible wealth and power it represented"; Lambton, that "They were sometimes men of true religion and integrity; but frequently they were venal, ignorant, and bigoted."<sup>471</sup>

Below this religious elite were far vaster numbers of less wealthy or prestigious mullas. Bayat notes that "Their function was to execute the mujtahid's orders, teach in the lower schools, and perform religious services."<sup>472</sup> The gap in wealth was matched by a gap in status between the authority

<sup>467</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 230, 232-33; Floor, "The Merchants (*tujjār*)," 103-104; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 27.

<sup>468</sup> Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 11, citing Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906. The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 60-61.

<sup>469</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 135; Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 438.

<sup>470</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 247.

<sup>471</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 146; Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 135.

<sup>472</sup> Mangol Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent. Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), 22.

of the mujtahids and the (sometimes) lack of reverence for the ordinary mulla and sayyid.<sup>473</sup> Bayat argues further that the ulama were not a cohesive, unified class, but rather were riven by internal factions, conflicts of interest and divergent religious outlooks.<sup>474</sup> One factor which may have united them was the growing perception of a real decline in their well-being in the course of the nineteenth century. The wealthy and middle classes lost control of vaqfs and saw their fees from involvement in bazaar affairs contract, and the poor were affected by rising prices and erosion of the urban economic base which supported them. The Qajar state and foreign powers came to be held responsible for most of these trends. We will see the ulama's ability to act politically in defense of their own and society's interests, as well as their internal differences, when we analyze the course of the Constitutional Revolution.

Bayat's definition of the ulama serves both to indicate their large numbers and diffuseness, and to highlight the existence of another educated group alongside them, the intelligentsia. She writes: "... practically the entire educated class of the nation who had not joined the civil service, the military, or who were not engaged primarily in independent commercial enterprises, were considered ulama."<sup>475</sup> Like the ulama, the intelligentsia were not involved in production or the organization of others' labor, but they did appropriate part of the surplus, and also like the ulama, they came to be important political actors by virtue of their shaping of ideologies in Iran.<sup>476</sup> Their base was in the at most five percent of the population that was literate,<sup>477</sup> but the sources of their education were quite other than those of the ulama. Few in number, they included those Iranians who had been educated in the West or the new technical college in Iran, the Dar al-Fonun. Their occupations included working for the state as teachers, bureaucrats, military officers or journalists, and in the private sector, primarily in journalism and publishing. Reform-minded bureaucrats and court officials (some of whose proposals we will see in Chapter Five) are perhaps typified by Malkam Khan, the ambassador to

<sup>473</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 242.

<sup>474</sup> Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 24-25.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>476</sup> Mehrain makes these points in "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States."

<sup>477</sup> In the late 1920s, a Soviet survey of the more advanced northern regions found literacy levels of five to ten percent, mostly officials, merchants and ulama: Issawi, *EHI*, 24. The rate in 1956 was only 15 percent of those over age 10: *ibid.*

England from 1873 to 1889. Dismissed in 1890, Malkam tried in a limited way to take his appeal to a broader public by publishing a critical newspaper, *Qanun* (Law), which circulated clandestinely in Iran.<sup>478</sup> Another diplomat, in France, was Mirza Yusuf Khan Mustashar al-Dauleh, author of *Yek Kalameh* (One Word), again a reference to *qanun*, rule of law.<sup>479</sup> Other members of the emerging intelligentsia were associated with the news media, either inside the government in the offices for translating Western books and newspapers, or outside it, working for such critical newspapers as the *Habl al-Matin*, published in Persian from Calcutta. The complex relations of the intelligentsia to the ulama, and their views and political activities, will be taken up in Chapter Five.

**Minorities and women.** Finally, we may briefly assess the situations of Iran's minorities and women, both of which cut across the class categories adopted above. All of these groups were to some extent, legally or practically, second-class citizens. Iran's Christian minorities included some 25,000 Nestorians and 26,000 Armenians in 1868, groups which were lightly taxed.<sup>480</sup> As we have seen, Armenians continued to be merchants, particularly in the thriving trade with Russia. In 1900 Eugène Aubin found them employed in British banks, the telegraph department and other foreign companies and concluded that "Armenian business houses in the bazaar [of Tabriz] hold a large share of the trade with Russia."<sup>481</sup> But as we have also seen, those of Julfa included a fair number of quite impoverished families and working class weavers, while Armenians provided some of the migrant labor to Russia as well.<sup>482</sup> Urban Christians often managed to get a good education: a school in Russian and Armenian opened in Tabriz as early as 1851, and a Soviet survey of the late 1920s found that in Urumiya, an astonishing 80 percent of Assyrian man *and* women, and 70 percent of Armenian men and women, were literate.<sup>483</sup>

<sup>478</sup> Bausani calls Malcolm "a highly intelligent man but lacking any moral sense or serious ability, [who] demonstrates the limitations of the so-called political liberalism in Persia": *The Persians*, 169-70.

<sup>479</sup> This time "law" refers explicitly to Islamic law: lecture by Hamid Algar on "Islam in Iran," University of California, Berkeley, February 22, 1982.

<sup>480</sup> Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 30-31.

<sup>481</sup> Eugène Aubin, *La Perse d'aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1908), 44, 293, cited by Issawi, *EHI*, 59.

<sup>482</sup> On Armenian migrants, see Issawi, *EHI*, 58.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 59.

Iran's Jewish population was estimated at 16,000 in 1868, and was said to pay heavy taxes. Thomson, who made this estimate, wrote: "They are mostly very poor, and excepting in Tehran, and some of the principal cities, are much persecuted and oppressed by the Mahometans.... As a general rule all over Persia, as much is taken [in taxes] from the Jews as can possibly be extorted from them."<sup>484</sup> Curzon judged in 1890 that

As a community, the Persian Jews are sunk in great poverty and ignorance....

The majority of Jews in Persia are engaged in trade, in jewellery, in wine and opium manufacture, as musicians, dancers, scavengers, peddlars, and in other professions to which is attached no great respect. They rarely attain to a leading mercantile position.<sup>485</sup>

But MacLean's 1904 report indicates that Jewish merchants in Hamadan and Kirmanshah had 80 percent of the import of Manchester cotton textiles through Baghdad in hand. There were also wealthy merchants at Bushire, and Muhammareh's small Jewish traders had much of the trade there.<sup>486</sup> A Jewish school was founded by the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1898, and had expanded to 11 schools by 1908, with 2,225 students.<sup>487</sup> The same Soviet literacy study found levels of 90 percent literacy for Jewish males in Urumiya, but only 20 percent (still high) for women.<sup>488</sup> One instance among many of harassment is related by Arjomand: in the later 1830s the imam jum'eh of Isfahan ordered the water supply to the city's Jewish quarter to be cut off.<sup>489</sup>

Zoroastrians numbered 7,200 in 1854 and 1868 estimates, and 9,300 in 1892 (6,900 in Yazd, 2,000 in Kirman and 300 in Tehran). They paid 903 tumans in poll taxes as non-Muslims in 1868, but were exempted from this tax in 1892.<sup>490</sup> Like the Jews of Iran, "the Zoroastrians suffered from both great poverty and severe discrimination.... Most of them seem to have earned a modest living in silk cultivation and weaving."<sup>491</sup> Their educational level was generally low, although with help from the Parsis of India two schools were opened in Yazd and Kirman in 1856 and others

<sup>484</sup> Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 31.

<sup>485</sup> Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 510.

<sup>486</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 62.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, based on Aubin, *La Perse d'aujourd'hui*, 295-300.

<sup>488</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 24.

<sup>489</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 250.

<sup>490</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 31, 63, 64.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

followed.<sup>492</sup> They too suffered persecution by certain ulama, as at Yazd in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>493</sup>

Upper-class urban women were in general the most restricted and heavily veiled in Iranian society, kept in their quarters at home. Recall too the authoritarianism and dominant attitude of the bureaucrat-landowner Mustafa Khan within his household, discussed above. Women—or their female servants—spent much time and effort in the provision and preparation of food and other household labor. Working class women were less restricted, and according to Fraser, “in the families of mechanics and villagers, the mysteries of the veil almost disappear,”<sup>494</sup> but of course their material well-being was less than that of their European counterparts or Iranian upper-class sisters. Urban women had their own religious services (and female mullas), and led “fairly frequent” urban bread riots. Yet in terms of the institutions of polygamy, temporary marriage, the divorce laws, they were second-class people.<sup>495</sup> Sheean claims they were oppressed as a whole, even by Islamic standards, writing in 1926: “The position of women is lower than in almost any other Mohammedan country; there is a tremendous gulf between the women of Cairo and Constantinople and the women of Teheran, even those of the very highest position.”<sup>496</sup> Given the existence of the areas of autonomy mentioned above, this is perhaps a debatable proposition.

**Secular trends: inflation and wages.** A key secular trend affecting above all the urban sector had to do with the relative movement of prices and wages. The reasons for the inflation that occurred in Qajar Iran have not been satisfactorily uncovered by researchers. There is some cause to link inflation to the depreciation of the Iranian silver currency, however. Between 1800 and 1900 the tuman fell in value by 410 percent—4.1 percent a year. But between 1800 and 1850, 1850-1870 and 1870-92 the rates were 2.4 percent, 2.0 percent and 4.5 percent respectively, while for 1892-1900 it was 18.8 percent.<sup>497</sup> The main unit of exchange, the kran (= one-tenth of a tuman) lost half its value between 1875 and 1895.<sup>498</sup> The toman fell successively in value from worth 1 pound sterling in

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, 64; Keddie, “Iran, 1797-1941,” 150-51.

<sup>493</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 250.

<sup>494</sup> Fraser, *Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia*, 260.

<sup>495</sup> Keddie, “Iran, 1797-1941,” 150.

<sup>496</sup> Sheean, *The New Persia*, 232.

<sup>497</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 36.

<sup>498</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 270-71.

1800, 0.75 in 1816, 0.55 in 1822, 0.50 in 1845, 0.46 in 1860, and only 0.20 in 1900.<sup>499</sup> Thus, while much of the decline did occur in the last quarter of the century, a large amount also transpired in the first quarter. In this earlier period the cause may have been the drain of specie out of Iran toward India (or perhaps the consequences of the defeat in the first Russian war?). In the later period, it can be linked above all to the fall in the international prices of silver in the 1890s, but also to such internal/external problems as the trade deficit, and such purely internal policies as abuses at the mint and rapid increases in the money supply.<sup>500</sup>

This fall in the external value of the currency found a reflection in an internal inflation at times in the nineteenth century, and this trend has great bearing on the standard of living and well-being of the urban population. Price data for the first part of the century is very sketchy. Lambton has found that "Prices rose sharply, on an average 70-150% between 1843 and 1861. Wheat, barley, charcoal and the hire of mules were three times as high in 1861 as in 1843."<sup>501</sup> The reasons for this early trend are hard to see, as the tuman was fairly stable externally in this period, unless it could be related to the first upsurge in foreign trade. For later in the century we possess more complete data from a variety of cities due to the excellent research of Gilbar (who is still not satisfied with its reliability). Three somewhat distinctive patterns emerge. One group of active commercial cities, mostly in the north, experienced a considerable inflation in the 1880s and 1890s, followed by a sudden deflation in the period just before the Constitutional Revolution (1900-1905), which still left prices higher than they had been ca. 1880. Thus in Tabriz a seven-item basket of goods (wheat, barley, rice, mutton, beef, charcoal and bread) cost 5.8 times more in 1900 than in 1868, but declined a year later to only 3.3 times versus 1868. In Tehran, a 15-commodity basket shows a 5.5-fold increase from 1880 to 1900 (27.5 percent a year!), while prices on eight items declined 35 percent between

<sup>499</sup> Lambton, "The Case of Ḥājī Nūr al-Dīn," 55; Rabino di Borgomale, *Coins, Medals and Seals of the Shāhs of Irān*, table IV between pages 18-19; Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 238; Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 208; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 273.

<sup>500</sup> On the export of specie, see Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 238; on the international price of silver, see Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 551-52, and Issawi, *EHI*, 338; on the trade deficit, see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 38; on the abuses at the mint, see Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 270-72.

<sup>501</sup> Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 238.

1900 and 1908. Prices rose 200 percent in Rasht between 1893 and 1898, and decreased by 23 percent from 1898 to 1907.<sup>502</sup> A variant on this was a lower rate of inflation in Isfahan, Shiraz, Bushire and to some extent Yazd, with prices doubling between 1880 and 1900, a five percent annual rate which Gilbar finds "moderate" compared to the north. A third pattern is observed in more hinterland-type regions such as Sistan, where prices were more stable throughout (I would put Yazd in this category, and Mashhad in the first, unlike Gilbar).<sup>503</sup> These patterns seem to be related to the proximity of cities to the world market, with inflation greatest and prices highest at a given moment in Tabriz, Tehran and Rasht (the largest two cities and one closest to Russia), in-between at Isfahan and Shiraz (large cities key to the Gulf trade), and least at Yazd and in Sistan, the hardest to reach areas of Iran. One other salient reason for price rises can be inferred—hoarding and speculation in agricultural produce by merchants, government officials and notables connected to the court.<sup>504</sup> Regardless of whether the mechanism can be fully explained, the available data indicate a rather persistent and substantial rate of inflation in Iran's urban centers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The key question that arises is how did these trends affect the living standards of the population? The overissue and consequent devaluation of the copper currency caused the main money used by artisans, workers and the urban poor to become worth less and less; Rabino wrote in 1891, "As this currency constitutes the whole fortune of the poor, the sufferings caused by the maladministration of the mint may be imagined."<sup>505</sup> A major determinant of the impact of the inflation has to do with whether wages kept up with it or not. Here there is less data than on prices. In general it seems that unskilled labor was making about 1 kran (10 cents) a day in the 1890s and 1.5 to 2 krans ca. 1900-10, while artisans made 2-3 krans in the 1890s and 4 to 6 ca. 1900-10. Both indicate increases of 50-100 percent over this period.<sup>506</sup> In the 1840s unskilled labor made 1/2 to 3/4 kran

<sup>502</sup> Gad G. Gilbar, "Trends in the Development of Prices in Late Qajar Iran, 1870-1906," pp. 177-198 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XVI, numbers 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1983), 180, 182, 184, 186 (tables 1, 2 and 3).

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-96, tables 4-8.

<sup>504</sup> Abdullaev, *Promyshlennost...*, in Issawi, *EHI*, 43.

<sup>505</sup> Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 278. See also Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 271.

<sup>506</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 40-42.

per day and master craftsmen 1 to 3 krans per day.<sup>507</sup> The only time series I have seen is for Mashhad from 1890 to 1906 (see Table 4.17).

Table 4.17  
Wages in Mashhad, 1890-1906  
(in krans per day/1 kran = ca. 10 cents)

Occupation	1890	1902/3	1905/6
Mason	2	4	7.5
Carpenter	3	3	6
Blacksmith	1.5	2	5
Laborer	1	1	2

Source: Issawi, *EHI*, 41 note 10.

The consul who provided the data in this table felt that prices had risen sharply, faster than wages.<sup>508</sup> And Gilbar's price data on Mashhad confirm that prices were stable there through 1897, then rose 100 percent by 1899/1900 and 300 percent by 1905/6.<sup>509</sup> Unskilled laborers' wages and carpenters lagged behind inflation, masons and blacksmiths roughly kept up (though blacksmiths were falling behind at the midpoint). The same trend is reported in Tabriz by the British consul in 1897, although at Rasht in 1898 and in MacLean's general report of 1904 the consuls felt that wages may have kept up or risen in proportion to prices.<sup>510</sup> Seyf has made an ingenious argument to the effect that urban unemployment and the loss of the handicraft sector depressed wages, while the shift to cash crops raised prices for food. The result would be an increasing gap in the urban population's ability to pay for food.<sup>511</sup> Issawi, too, although admitting that "To draw a general conclusion is almost impossible," feels that craftspeople saw some deterioration in their standard of living, while for the unskilled, wages rose less prices.<sup>512</sup> The present survey of the available information points in the directions suggested by Seyf and Issawi: the urban population in general, and artisans, workers

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>508</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, 41 note 10.

<sup>509</sup> Gilbar, "Trends in the Development of Prices," 187 table 4.

<sup>510</sup> On Rasht and Tabriz, see Issawi, *EHI*, 41 note 10; MacLean, "Report on the Conditions and Prospects," 142.

<sup>511</sup> Seyf, "Commercialization of Agriculture," 238.

<sup>512</sup> Issawi, *EHI*, 42.

and the urban poor in increasing order, suffered significant material decline in their standards of living at the end of the nineteenth century, in the period leading up to the Constitutional Revolution.

**Urban values, attitudes, ideologies.** The range and variety of political cultures in the urban sector is both more complex and accessible to the researcher than in the peasant or tribal sectors. Towns were divided into districts or wards, which tended to be rivals of one another, with competing functions. Criss-crossing senses of loyalty could co-exist. As Lambton says, loyalty was given "mainly to the group, the quarter, the town, the craft, the religious order, or the tribe, and [came] to be expressed mainly in Islamic terms."<sup>513</sup>

Islam was a multi-sided phenomenon, and commanded almost universal, if diffuse, respect. When Nikki Keddie was in Iran in 1959-60 she asked many old men who had been born in the 1880s and 1890s what they had wanted to be when they were little boys:

A large majority said, 'a great *mujtahid*,' or something similar. Not one said he wanted to be in the government, even though none of these men became *mujtahids* and many of them had held governmental positions. Among the group questioned, at least, it was clearly *mujtahids*, and not governmental men, who were admired and formed role models.<sup>514</sup>

Although it may also be true that "the *ulama* as a class were frequently regarded as oppressive, dishonest, and selfish,"<sup>515</sup> the leading *ulama* nevertheless gradually came to be considered a source of protection and defense against the encroachments of the state and foreigners. This was the case as early as Malcolm's trips in 1801 and 1808; one could seek *bast* (asylum) in the houses of religious dignitaries, shrines and mosques. Moreover, "The conception of a national state had little appeal for the man in the street, but the idea of Islam in danger at the hands of infidels immediately evoked response."<sup>516</sup> Ta'ziya passion plays commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn at Karbala gained wide popularity in the nineteenth century.<sup>517</sup> Sufism, on the other hand, was in large measure

<sup>513</sup> Ann K. S. Lambton, "Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution of 1905-6," pp. 43-60 in *St Antony's Papers*, Middle Eastern Affairs, number 4 (London, 1958, and New York: Praeger, 1959), 43.

<sup>514</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 139.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>516</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 136. See Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), II, 304 on the popularity of the *ulama* as a shield against absolute royal authority.

<sup>517</sup> Algar, "Shi'ism and Iran in the Eighteenth Century," 301.

reduced to influence only at court; unlike in the rest of the Islamic world, in Iran it was a "predominantly aristocratic movement."<sup>518</sup> This only underlines the degree to which the ulama's version of Islam had become the popular one. Shi'ism, as we saw in the Safavid period, had (at least) a Janus face: "... Shi'i Islam's influence on Iranian society was such that it both justified submissiveness and exhorted heroism; depending on the circumstances, one or the other was emphasized accordingly."<sup>519</sup> This theme will resurface in discussing the state's legitimation problems, below.

More secular values and belief-systems also existed in Qajar Iran, and some of them can be observed changing in the course of increased contact with the West. Artisans retained their craft traditions, though one would like to have more data on their responses to the undermining of large sections of guild production by foreign imports. The use of one's craft as "a sort of surname," for example, signifies a sense of identity and solidarity among artisans.<sup>520</sup> Though merchants shared the bazaar with craftspeople, each possessed their own symbols of status differentiation, particularly their dress, and seating arrangements in mosques, coffee houses and the public bath.<sup>521</sup> Some merchants, particularly the larger-scale ones, and those of northern centers like Tabriz, had more knowledge of the outside world than any other members of urban society. They learned foreign languages, travelled to other societies and encountered the latest business techniques in the course of their work.<sup>522</sup> Their response to the West would be particularly complex—some collaborating and adopting Western ways, others opposing foreign encroachment out of Islamic or proto-nationalistic sentiments.

Popular attitudes towards wealth and authority could be rooted either in Islamic or secular world-views. Their overlap is suggested by Afshari's account, in which words carry religious resonances along with a populist political content:

<sup>518</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 218-19.

<sup>519</sup> Afshari, "The *Pishivarān* and Merchants," 147. The metaphor of a Janus face is Arjomand's.

<sup>520</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>522</sup> Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 734; A. Enayat, "The Problem of Imperialism," 67-68.

... a popular conception ... divided the society into two categories: the oppressed majority (*mazlūmīn*) and a small minority of oppressors (*zālimīn*). It was through *zulm* (oppression) that wealth was accumulated; thus, in the people's mind, every *zālim* was wealthy, and the *mazlūm* was by definition, poor if not destitute. A *zālim* could be a landlord, tribal khan, high-level official, or a wealthy *mulla*. The Royal Palace was considered to be the nest of first-rate *zālimīn*.<sup>523</sup>

A more overtly political ideology was introduced into Iran in the form of the social-democratic ideas to which migrants were exposed in turn-of-the-century Russia. Though Floor downplays the degree to which these ideas permeated the Iranian working class as a whole (and it is of course true that, certainly at first, limited numbers were aware of them), it is fair to say—based even on his own evidence—that this ideology did put down roots. In 1904 Social-Democrats in the Caucasus formed an organization called “Hemmat” (Endeavor) to organize Muslim workers in Russia. The next year socialists organized the *Ijtima’iyyun-i ‘Amiyyun-i Iran* (roughly, “Social Democracy of Iran”) in the Caucasus, and soon there were branches in Tabriz, Mashhad, Tehran, Khoi, Isfahan and Anzali.<sup>524</sup> These groups would play a role in the Constitutional Revolution and the early trade union strikes. In a somewhat later period—the early 1920s—a number of progressive newspapers linked to the union movement and social democratic groups appeared in Iran. One, *Haqiqat* (Truth), had 4,000 readers. There were also at this time an array of working class cultural organizations—libraries, theatrical groups, schools and clubs—in Tehran, Tabriz, Rasht and Qazvin.<sup>525</sup> Thus, at the end of the Qajar period, a smaller secular stream of radical ideas began to flow alongside the various trends within Islamic popular culture.

#### II.D. The Tribal Sector

**The tribal population.** Demographic data on Iran's tribespeople in the Qajar period is incomplete and difficult to present with confidence. Estimates on absolute numbers in the tribal sector (including partly sedentary—hence agricultural—tribes like the Kurds) begin with Helfgott's detailed enumeration of the tribes ca. 1800, giving a total figure of about 1,500,000 people, and end with Gilbar's 2,500,000 for ca. 1900. The problem is knowing what happened in between, since we

<sup>523</sup> Afshari, “The *Pishivarān* and Merchants,” 146-47.

<sup>524</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 4-5, 9; Hakimian, “Wage Labor and Migration,” 457-58.

<sup>525</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 20-21, 67 note 60.

possess two widely disparate figures: Thomson's 1,700,000 for 1868, and Gilbar's 3,000,000-3,500,000 for ca. 1850.<sup>526</sup> The question arises: was there a steady progression (1,500,000—1,700,000—2,500,000), or a rapid increase followed by a setback (1,500,000—3,000,000—2,500,000)? The most plausible inference is an increasing population to about 1870 (the time of the Great Famine), a sudden decline in the famine years, and a gradual, perhaps accelerating recovery through 1914. The devastating impact of the famine is suggested by estimates of 50-60,000 tents for the Qashqai before 1869 and only 10-12,000 in 1891.<sup>527</sup> Gilbar also points to tribes such as the Guklan Turkomans who migrated to Russian Central Asia in the 1880s and 1890s due to closer border controls,<sup>528</sup> and a tendency to sedentarization among other tribes, which we will examine in a moment. The principal tribal populations in 1800, according to Helfgott's analysis, were the Kurds (300,000), Bakhtiari (180,000), Luri (180,000), Afshar (130,000), Arabs (120,000), Shaqaqi (90,000), Qajar (80,000), Shahsevan (70,000), Qashqai (40,000), Khamseh (40,000), Yamut (15,000), Guklan (15,000) and Baluch (15-20,000).<sup>529</sup> He adds in 100,000 Afghans who would no longer be within Iranian territory later in the century.

The issue of the proportion of the population that was "tribal" is just as vexed. While there is wide agreement on the figure of 25 percent for 1900-1914, the starting point—1800—has widely varying estimates of 25 to 50 percent, and Gilbar's 33 percent for mid-century presents us with the same dilemma as above (see Table 4.8). I am inclined to infer a downward trend because the eighteenth-century dislocation of the economy probably increased the proportion of people living from pastoralism, and in the course of the nineteenth, with its Great Famine and the start of a trend toward greater sedentarization the primarily nomadic segment of the population probably decreased. The starting point may well have been below 50 percent however. The logic of a sedentarization process among certain tribes derives from the restoration of central authority early in the century, followed much

<sup>526</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 91, 101; Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 145; Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 28.

<sup>527</sup> Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 145, citing Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, II, 113. See also McDaniel, "Economic Change and Economic Resiliency," 40.

<sup>528</sup> Gilbar, "Demographic developments," 146.

<sup>529</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 101 table 2, to which I have added the 3-4,000 "tents" of the Baluch.

later by the probable impact of the famine combined with the new incentives to produce cash crops. Thus the Lurs in Fars began to grow both cash and subsistence crops, the Mamassanis of Khuzistan were persuaded by merchants and landlords to grow cash crops, and the Khalkhur tribes around Kirmanshah had their grazing lands sold out from under them by their chiefs to a large merchant, compelling them to settle in villages.<sup>530</sup> A section of the Khamseh, the Baharlu, was reportedly becoming settled in the 1880s, while the Kurds already numbered many agriculturalists, though most were mountain herders in addition. This highlights the process nature of sedentarization, with combinations of agriculture and pastoralism a viable (indeed common) intermediate way of life.<sup>531</sup>

**Economic and social developments.** The primary labor process for most of Iran's tribespeople continued to be pastoral production, however. Extensive areas—Lambton sees no decline in their size during the nineteenth century—remained tribal grazing lands, “notably Fārs, the Bakhtiārī, Khūzistān, the frontier areas of Khurāsān, and parts of Azarbāyjān and Balūchistān.”<sup>532</sup> Tribal output continued to consist of a variety of pastoral products: meat, milk and ghee (clarified butter), sheep and camel wool, skins and hides, carpets, and live animals themselves.<sup>533</sup> Animal husbandry was very heavily hit by the 1869-72 famine, especially in the south. An 1871 British estimate was that two-thirds of southern pack animals had died. Another estimate for the Bushire—Shiraz—Yazd route was that only eight percent survived. In the 1880s and 1890s the situation improved. The Bakhtiari were said to possess 500,000 sheep and goats and 15,000 mules ca. 1900; in the late 1890s there were 40,000 donkeys, 25,000 camels, 9,000 mules and ponies, and 6,000 horses in Khurasan. One district in poor Baluchistan had 20,000 sheep and goats.<sup>534</sup> Tribespeople had contacts with local, regional and foreign merchants and markets. The main nexus was trade at certain cities:

<sup>530</sup> Gilbar, “Demographic developments,” 146-47.

<sup>531</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 159, on the Khamseh; Helfgott, “The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty,” 97-98, on the Kurds; Bausani, *The Persians*, 173, on “semi-sedentarization.”

<sup>532</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 140, 157.

<sup>533</sup> Gilbar, “The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century,” 188.

<sup>534</sup> *Idem*, “Persian Agriculture,” 357-58.

Mīrzā Husayn Khān, in his book *Jughrāfiā-yi Isfahān*, mentions that many tribes came during the summer months to the neighborhood of Isfahan and traded in the city and villages, "bringing sheep and taking back cash, cloth and other goods."<sup>535</sup>

Wool was in great demand for the carpet industry. It was purchased directly from nomads for cash, according to an 1891 report from Mashhad.<sup>536</sup> Table 4.18 indicates the increase in wool exported abroad (much of it to France), as well as in skins and hides, mostly untanned.

Table 4.18  
Export of Tribal Products, 1850s-1907

Year	Raw Wool Exports (in pounds)	Skins and Hides Exported
late 1850s	negligible	49,420
1889	18,286	22,857
1901/2	62,190	72,495
1906/7	271,418	311,836

Source: Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 360.

Another export was horses, worth some 40,000 pounds sterling in 1857; along with sheep they accounted for 8.6 percent of Iran's visible exports that year.<sup>537</sup> Tribal carpets were collected by urban merchants for sale and export, but the bulk of the profits certainly accrued to the urban sector and tribal chiefs, rather than tribal craftspeople. So pastoralists too were drawn into contact with the world and national markets; though this probably had a less decisive impact on their way of life than it did on peasants and artisans, it didn't benefit them greatly either. The one other area of growth as a result of such contact was in the provision of pack animals for transport. As we have seen, tribespeople responded to this demand, but were set back significantly during the Great Famine.

Economic relations with the state impinged in the form of taxes and military service. Various reports on the tax on flocks suggest surprisingly that it was paid in cash at a fixed rate per animal, such as three krans per camel, one per sheep or goat, with other rates for asses, horses and cows.<sup>538</sup>

Though this reflects the increasing tribal participation in a cash economy, undoubtedly there

<sup>535</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 573, citing Mirza Husayn Khan's *Jughrafiya-yi Isfahan* [Geography of Isfahan], edited by M. Sotoudeh (Tehran 1342/1963), 92.

<sup>536</sup> Cited by Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 359.

<sup>537</sup> Gilbar, "The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century," 188; Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 181, 417 note 25.

continued to be considerable payment in kind as well as, or in lieu of, such taxes. Tribal leaders collected these taxes, and Lambton suggests that the khans would take fairly stiff amounts from their followers, to keep for themselves what was not forwarded to the state.<sup>539</sup> Military skills remained a tribal monopoly in the Qajar period:

The tribemen's mastery over the horse and their marksmanship, the relatively good tribal organization, and the spirit of tribal solidarity could make a tribal confederacy, under a dynamic leadership, a formidable military unit.<sup>540</sup>

Various tribes served in the Qajar armies of the early nineteenth century, and from the 1880s on, the Cossack brigade was composed of Shahsevan, Kurds and others.<sup>541</sup> But the army career in general stagnated, and far more tribesmen remained outside it, in a more adversarial relationship with the government, putting their skills to use in raiding caravans and settlements and resisting local authorities. There was systematic arms smuggling both in the north and south: "By 1910, nearly every tribesman had a modern weapon."<sup>542</sup> The purchase of arms proved a major point of contact with the market economy.

Women continued to be far more active economically in the tribal sector than elsewhere in Iranian society. Afshari discerns "intensive use of woman power in the process of production, both in tending the animals and in sideline production."<sup>543</sup> Such sidelines included handicraft production, particularly of carpets, a valuable commodity. Tribal women went unveiled more often than their urban and village sisters. They were thus in most respects more equal to men in status and activity. Lambton writes of their "far higher degree of liberty than the townswomen"; Keddie of their relative freedom.<sup>544</sup>

The well-being of tribespeople, particularly the pastoralists, as a whole can be generally considered to have been greater and more secure than for the Iranian peasantry, although the degree to

<sup>538</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 142, 158, 169.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>540</sup> Afshari, "The *Pishivarān* and Merchants," 138.

<sup>541</sup> Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire," 624.

<sup>542</sup> McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 24.

<sup>543</sup> Afshari, "The *Pishivarān* and Merchants," 138.

<sup>544</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Early Qājars," 139; Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 140-42, 150.

which this was true varied from place to place and over time. Many tribespeople were very poor, as in Kurdistan, where Lambton deciphers a vicious cycle of "poverty, disorder, frequent rebellions, and insecurity."<sup>545</sup> Despite their own reputation as plunderers, tribespeople were themselves sometimes badly abused by provincial authorities, as well as by the settled population with which they came into contact.<sup>546</sup> The Great Famine period certainly exacted a heavy toll on the pastoral groups too. Taken all in all, however, their material condition, already better than the peasants', was most likely better maintained and less eroded, if it didn't actually improve within the limits of the demographic decline, during the Qajar period.

**Political developments.** On balance the tribes were circumscribed at the level of state power, but effectively fairly autonomous in their own areas. No longer capable of seizing central control, as had the Safavids, Afghans, Afshars, Zands and Qajars from 1500 to 1800, their sights had to be set lower, and in terms of remaining unmolested locally they did have considerable success through the 1920s. The Qajar state employed several mechanisms to divide and rule them, and its task was made easier by the "constitutional inability" of tribal leaders to combine.<sup>547</sup>

One effective method was to incorporate tribal chiefs into the ruling class. Certain chiefs became extensive landholders, had mercantile connections and served as provincial governors. This naturally encouraged identification with the state and dominant classes, and furthered internal stratification within tribes as patronage and favoritism extended downward. Within the Qajar tribe, for example, leading khans were given positions in the civil and military administration, but "it still is not clear what happened to the members of the Qajar tribe during the nineteenth century when the tribe itself disappeared as a pastoral nomadic unit."<sup>548</sup> Thus the tribe itself declined even as it furnished part of Iran's elite. Other tribes were reined in by royal appointment of their head as an *ilkhan* (tribal leader). The first *ilkhan* of the Bakhtiari—Husayn Quli Khan Ilkhani—possessed large landholdings and held government offices, which gave him the means to assert his power over the

<sup>545</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 162.

<sup>546</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-62.

<sup>547</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 130.

<sup>548</sup> Helfgott, "Tribalism as a Socio-Economic Formation," 60-61 note 40.

whole tribe but also bound him to the state. As he wrote to Nasir al-Din Shah in 1878:

It is now thirty years that I have served and labored dutifully night and day, and I have transformed the unruly Bakhtiyari into the likes of the peasants of Linjan. I have collected and submitted 31 taxes from the Bakhtiyari; the clearance of accounts are in hand, and I do not have 31 qirans outstanding on the tax account. I spend six months each year on the Isfahan side of the Bakhtiyari busy maintaining its order and collecting its taxes. The other six months I am in Arabestan and Lorestan in the service of the governor with armed Bakhtiyari cavalry.<sup>549</sup>

The ilkhan had vast income from landholdings, official *tiyuls* and tribal dues. He invested capital with urban merchants, becoming involved in the tobacco, grain and mutton trade, with agents in Isfahan, Shiraz and Bushire. He had relations with Qajar princes, other tribal leaders, ulama, merchants and bureaucrats, as well as with the British. None of this forestalled his death at an anxious Nasir al-Din's command in 1882.<sup>550</sup> The Qashqai, who originated from diverse Lur, Kurdish, Baluch and Turkoman elements in the eighteenth century, received an ilkhan in 1818.<sup>551</sup> The Khamseh were an artificial grouping of Iranian, Arab and three Turkic tribes into an alliance under a merchant family—the Qavams of Shiraz—to create a counterforce to Qashqai raiders. From being “a constant source of trouble,” after 1876 “some sort of control” was restored in Fars.<sup>552</sup> Tribes who did not develop or accept the institution of ilkhan or its equivalent—Kurds, Arabs, and above all Turkomans—were less effectively ruled by the Qajars, with the Turkomans in particular moving quite freely in their area.<sup>553</sup>

Tribes also entered into political relationships with foreigners—Russians, British and Germans—as well as the Qajar state. British payments of gifts and arms to tribes who would support their aims, especially the Bakhtiari who were paid road taxes to let British goods pass through their territory—are typical of such relationships.<sup>554</sup>

<sup>549</sup> Gene R. Garthwaite, “Khans and Kings: The Dialectics of Power in Bakhtiari History,” pp. 159-172 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 170.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.* Gilbar, “The Persian Economy in the mid-19th Century,” 201.

<sup>551</sup> Garthwaite, “Khans and Kings,” 168; Lois Beck, “Tribes and the State in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Iran,” lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, November 13, 1985.

<sup>552</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 159; Abrahamian, “Oriental Despotism,” 29; Garthwaite, “Khans and Kings,” 169.

<sup>553</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 160-61; Lambton, “Persia: The Breakdown of Society,” 434; Garthwaite, “Khans and Kings,” 169.

<sup>554</sup> Mehrain, “The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States,” 118-20; Beck, “Tribes and the State.”

**Tribal culture, values, attitudes.** This, like peasant culture, is a difficult area for the researcher to penetrate. Helfgott has remarked on tribal attitudes toward the state, the peasantry and their own military prowess:

... tribal attitudes and practices were still directed against the acceptance of centralized rule. The tribesmen had local rather than national loyalties. The tribal economic structure encouraged attitudes which downgraded the importance of regularized, sedentary, commercial or agricultural activity. These attitudes emphasized a form of military prowess oriented toward pillage of local, agrarian communities and disruption of trade by controlling the trade routes and harassing merchants in the process of moving goods, thereby limiting the flow of products throughout the country.<sup>555</sup>

Lambton has commented on tribal "virtues and vices":

The virtues most prized among tribal leaders were generosity and courage; but once settled in the towns or compelled to become courtiers they did not materially differ from other high officials. As a whole the tribes had, as Malcolm points out, the virtues and vices of their condition: they were sincere, hospitable, and brave; but rude, violent and rapacious.<sup>556</sup>

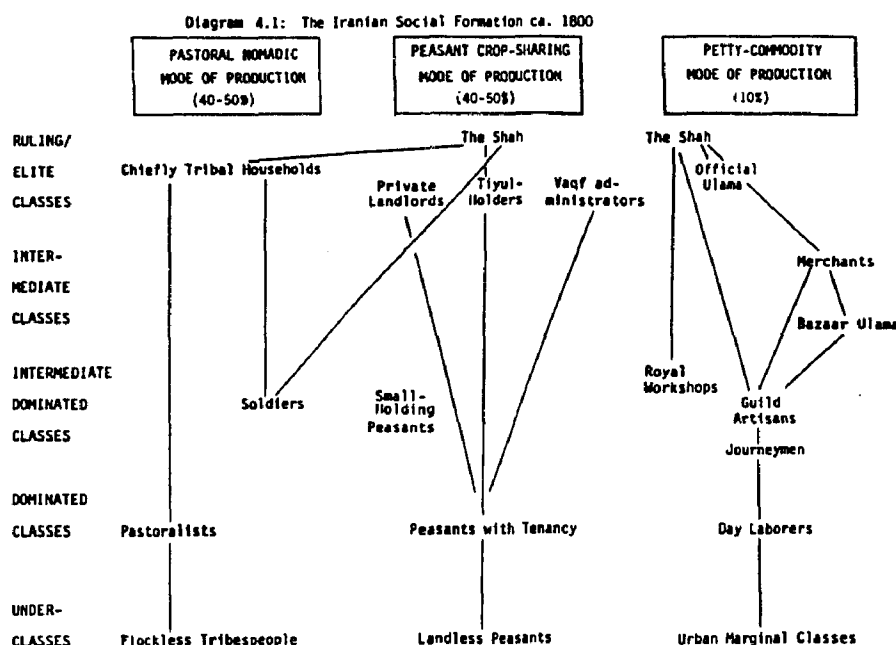
Feelings of independence and tribal solidarity, of identification with one's tribe and love for one's animals and pasture lands undoubtedly remained strong in most tribespeople during the Qajar period. As tribal khans enhanced their position materially, this may have created stresses for the ordinary tribesperson who continued to live in the same way as before, fairly close to the margin of subsistence. But formation of class consciousness, either within tribes (directed against grasping khans), or across tribes (overcoming their feuds and mutual suspicions to unite against the central government), was precluded by the isolated, familial nature of the labor process and the deep roots of tribal custom, which instilled respect for the elders and chief and defiance of the outsider.

## **II.E. Conclusions: The Changing Qajar Social Formation**

Between 1630 and 1800, virtually no changes had taken place in either the fundamental modes of production, or their constituent classes, within the Iranian social formation. Diagram 4.1 depicts this with the same figure utilized in Chapter Two. The *size* of the economy had contracted considerably in the eighteenth century, and the proportion of the population involved in each of the three

<sup>555</sup> Helfgott, "The Rise of the Qājār Dynasty," 87.

<sup>556</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 130.

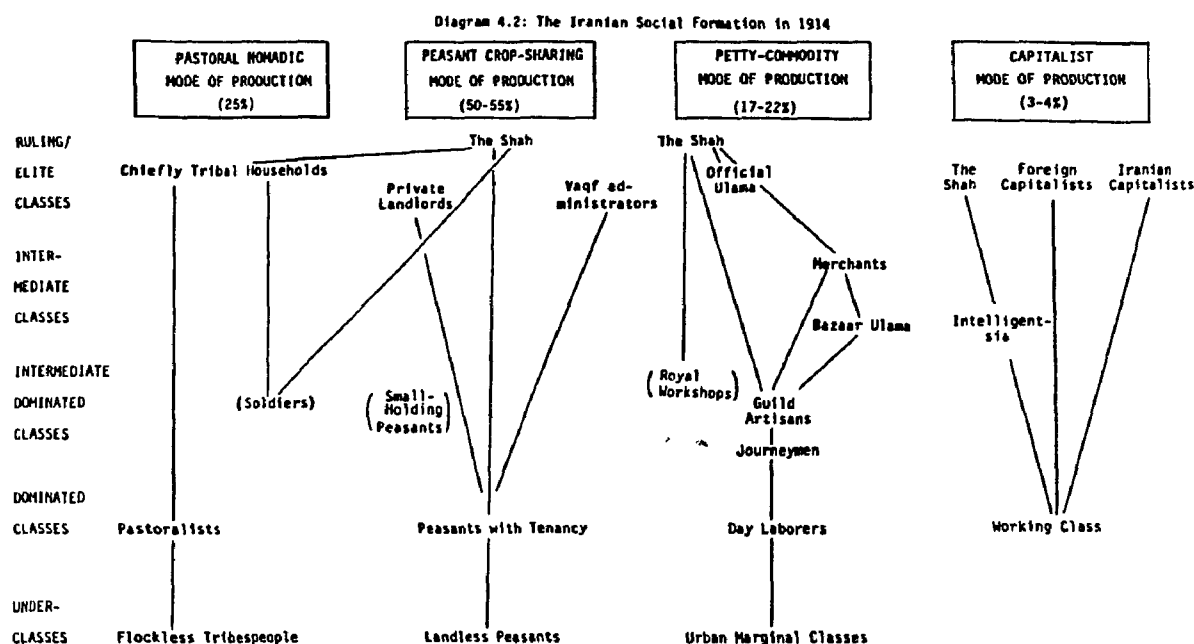


modes of production had shifted somewhat—compare 1630 to 1800 in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19  
Percentage of Population in Each Mode of Production, 1630-1914

Year	Pastoral	Peasant Crop-Sharing	Petty-Commodity	Capitalist
1630	33-40	45-55	10-15	0
1800	40-50	40-50	10	0
1914	25	50-55	17-22	3-4

By 1914, both quantitative and qualitative changes had occurred in the Iranian social formation. Quantitatively, the proportion of pastoralists had dropped quite significantly, the urban sector (petty-commodity plus capitalist modes of production) had almost doubled its share of the population, and the peasantry had become an even clearer majority (since the pastoral mode declined in size). Qualitatively, a small capitalist sector had emerged, with a more prominent native working class than capitalist class, due to the presence of rival foreign capitalists and the additional Iranian workers in Russia. Diagram 4.2 suggests the contours of Iran's new class structure ca. 1914. Other changes since 1800 included the growing hegemony of private landlords in the peasant crop-sharing mode of production at the expense of the state and small peasants (now in parentheses to indicate a decline), and



the decline of the royal workshops in the urban sector (replaced in part by the shah/state as a small-scale capitalist (running munitions factories and the like) in the capitalist mode). The tribal sector provided fewer soldiers (in parentheses to suggest this) to the state than in the past. British and Russian foreign capitalists have been added to the dominant classes, along with Iran's own small capitalist class, and a working class, still quite small in size, has come into existence as a dominated class alongside pastoralists, peasants and day laborers in the bazaar. A small intelligentsia has also come into existence as an intermediate dominated class (or group), apposite to the bazaar ulama, but in the capitalist mode of production. Taken all in all, the nineteenth century had witnessed a major transition from the period 1500 to 1800, changing the shape of Iran's class structure and altering somewhat the balance of forces within it. For as we have seen, the artisans were particularly hard hit by the Western impact, and merchants experienced a mixed set of gains for some and losses for others. The Qajar state too, which continued to tap several sources of surplus, was weaker in all three of the older modes of production than had been the Safavids, and hardly active at all in the new capitalist mode. We turn now to its organizational structure and ideological strengths and weaknesses.

### III. The State

Under this heading we will discuss the main institutions comprising the Qajar state, its fiscal problems, its relations with foreign powers, and its claims to, and problems with, legitimation. Certain other problems relevant to the state, such as reforms of the bureaucracy, will be discussed in Chapter Five.

#### III.A. Institutions

**The court and bureaucracy.** The shah's powers remained, as in the past, far-reaching and wide-ranging: he declared war and peace, made treaties, granted *tiyuls* and offices, determined and collected taxes, was the seat of last recourse in the legal system, and had the power of life and death over all subjects, as well as the final claim on virtually anyone's property. This led to an imperious and absolute style of government, which was to some degree transmitted downward to all levels of the bureaucracy:

The character of government to which they are attached, despotic, insolent and treacherous, naturally forms that of its servants. The nobles and superior officers of court, subjected absolutely to the caprice of a tyrant who can neither endure opposition nor disappointment, though they may continue cringing and abject to him, become in their turn, cruel, haughty and imperious to their inferiors; and these again are delighted, when they can exercise the same petty tyranny upon such as may be unhappily subjected to their power.<sup>557</sup>

The bureaucracy of ca. 1800 was quite rudimentary and small, consisting of a handful of accountants and scribes working in military and financial administrative divisions. Fath 'Ali Shah brought in a number of officials from longstanding bureaucratic families to fill out this skeletal arrangement along the lines of the Safavid state, although still on a smaller scale.<sup>558</sup> In the course of the nineteenth century, the administration both grew and modernized itself, until by the 1890s there were ten ministries, with, for example, the Ministry of Finance employing 210 officials and the Ministry of Pensions and Endowments 32 officials.<sup>559</sup> By 1922 there were 530 government employees in Tabriz, and in 1928—already the post-Qajar era, to be sure—Tehran had an incredible 23,261 government

<sup>557</sup> Fraser, *Journey into Khorasān*, 171.

<sup>558</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 436-37; Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism," 11, 19-20.

officials.<sup>560</sup> Examples of modernized areas of the state include the postal service, which was established in 1851, with a regular service in the mid-1870s (Iran joined the International Postal Union in 1877), and 224 post offices by 1918; the telegraphs, which expanded from 46 offices and 4,000 kilometers of line in 1876 to 130 offices and 9,640 kilometers in 1904; education, spearheaded by the Dar al-Fonun ("House of Techniques"), founded in mid-century to teach military affairs, Western science and medicine, and languages; and the first official newspaper, the *Ruznameh-i Vaqayi'-i Ittafaqiyyeh* ("The Journal of Current Events"), which had an English editor and printed extracts from European papers.<sup>561</sup> On the traditional side of the state, both Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1797-1834) and Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848-96) maintained huge harems (the latter had 200 wives, each with her own servants, carriage and establishment). Amounts of up to 100,000 pounds sterling annually were spent on pensions to royal family members and favorites.<sup>562</sup> The shah's wives had considerable influence at court, and his daughters would extend this by marrying leading governors, bureaucrats, religious and other dignitaries.<sup>563</sup>

At the top of the bureaucracy, offices tended to become the private property of their holders, and to concentrate in a few hands which were constantly engaged in rivalries. A good example of this was Amin al-Sultan, the prime minister, minister of court and interior, and administrator of the southern ports, whose brother ran the treasury and farmed the customs, and whose associate, the wealthy merchant Amin al-Zarb, farmed the mint.<sup>564</sup> The sale or farming of offices arose from the chronic fiscal problems of the Qajars and burgeoned into a full-scale and abusive practice. Lambton observes that by 1844 the sale of offices "had become more widespread."<sup>565</sup> The farming of the mint and the customs led to major abuses of up to 250,000 pounds sterling in illegal customs entries, and tampering with the silver and copper content of coins.<sup>566</sup> The state ultimately lost revenue by

<sup>559</sup> Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 55.

<sup>560</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 13 note 3, 41 note 67.

<sup>561</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 568; Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer," 95-96; Bausani, *The Persians*, 167.

<sup>562</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 263, 278.

<sup>563</sup> See Lambton, "Persian Society under the Early Qājārs," 127.

<sup>564</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 268-69.

<sup>565</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 451.

this stop-gap measure, and the population paid for it in greater taxes and a debased currency that lessened purchasing power.

**Provincial and urban administration.** Early governors were drawn from among the leading families and tribes, and included a large number of Qajar princes, as in Khuzistan, Fars, Kirmanshah, Khurasan and Mazandaran. This revision to earlier (pre-1600) Safavid practices "meant that in each provincial capital there was a copy (on a smaller scale) of the court at Tehrān with all the burden which that imposed on the local population."<sup>567</sup> Some of those who were not Qajars married into the royal family (Fath 'Ali Shah had 20 daughters and 150 sons). Governors enjoyed considerable local autonomy and kept much of their jurisdictions' surplus:

The provincial governors were not the paid servants of the state. All they were required to do was to remit to the central government a definite sum by way of provincial revenue annually together with a New Year present, and to provide troops when called upon by the shah to do so. Their exercise of the power delegated to them in their government was absolute....

The provincial governors were entitled to collect over and above the ordinary and extraordinary taxes the cost of the expenses of the provincial administration.<sup>568</sup>

The peripheries of the Qajar domain—Baluchistan, Sistan, Harat, Qandahar, Khuzistan, Bandar 'Abbas, Georgia, the Qashqai/Bakhtiari areas—were controlled particularly loosely by the state.<sup>569</sup>

To stanch their various fiscal crises the Qajar shahs began to auction off governorships. In 1843-44, for example, a new governor in Fars paid 70,000 tumans for his position.<sup>570</sup> By the second half of the century governorships were systematically sold to the highest bidder—the one who promised to remit the most in taxes. The new governor then sub-farmed districts and offices in the same way, until the peasantry at the base of the social order paid for it all.<sup>571</sup> In 1894 the shah sold the governorship of Fars for 23,000 pounds sterling and then sold it again to someone else. As Amin

<sup>566</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 270-71, 277. Tax-farming customs officials would lower their tariff rates to attract trade; when the government changed over to direct administration of the customs in 1900, revenues rose from 220,000 pounds sterling to 300,000: Keddie, "The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914," 125; Rabino, "An Economist's Notes on Persia," 268.

<sup>567</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 127; also Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism," 11, and Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 434.

<sup>568</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 434-35.

<sup>569</sup> This list comes from Saleh, "Social Formations in Iran," 125; Lambton shows how this was true in Fars province in the 1840s: "The Case of Ḥājī Nūr al-Dīn."

<sup>570</sup> Lambton, "The Case of Ḥājī Nūr al-Dīn," 65.

al-Dauleh, the shah's private secretary and minister of pensions and endowments, wrote in his memoirs:

A governor who mounts the saddle by paying *pishkesh* ('gift money') and who has no hope of permanence or stability does his business at the first opportunity. Since he has paid *pishkesh* he cannot be called to account for cruelty and oppression.<sup>572</sup>

In 1893 the prime minister Amin al-Sultan told the British minister Lascelles: "Do not expect any patriotism from us. It does not exist in the country. Self-interest, greed and avarice abound. Beyond that no one cares what happens."<sup>573</sup> In 1904 the governorship of Baluchistan was purchased for 47,000 tumans, some 5,000 more than previously. As the British consul in Kirman, Percy Sykes, noted at the time, this "bodes ill for the hapless Baluch." The tax oppression became so severe as a result of the high price of office that Sykes reported the next year that "owing to the increased taxation, which it is feared the people will not be able to pay, various governorships in the province are vacant, no one being willing to accept them."<sup>574</sup> Here, as in the central bureaucracy, the practice of tax-farming and sale of offices cost both the state a loss of revenue and the lower classes in higher taxes.

Urban administration was conducted in a less spectacular or extortionate manner. The structure of government was reminiscent of the Safavid system, if somewhat scaled down. Towns were administered by a *kalantar* (mayor), *muhtasib* (market inspector with other public duties) and *kadkhudas* (heads of a district or quarter). The top officials were named by the shah, but he had to follow public opinion.<sup>575</sup> In general the kadkhuda as a tax collector was most often representing the state, in function if not appointment.<sup>576</sup> The legal system remained dual: the *darugha* (police prefect) handled urban criminal affairs, the religious qazis handled personal law. The monarch could be appealed to by anyone.<sup>577</sup>

<sup>571</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 138; Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade," 176-77, on southern Iran.

<sup>572</sup> Cited by Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 264.

<sup>573</sup> Cited in *ibid.*

<sup>574</sup> Sykes's Foreign Office memos are cited by Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 119.

<sup>575</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 147.

<sup>576</sup> Mehrain, "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 70.

<sup>577</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 438.

**The army.** The Qajar army went through many changes in the course of the nineteenth century, none of which solved its problems sufficiently to make it a useful instrument of state externally or internally. The troops used by Aqa Muhammad to capture the throne were little different in nature from those of 'Abbas the Great; numbering 60-70,000, paid for 6-7 months a year, "Their principal arms were bows and arrows, clubs, lances, swords and daggers. The cavalry wore coats of mail and some used small shields. Fire-arms consisted of long muskets, mostly matchlocks. Artillery was seldom employed."<sup>578</sup> Under Fath 'Ali Shah the standing army was pared down to as few as 12,000 soldiers plus 3-4,000 in a bodyguard.<sup>579</sup> Gardane drilled parts of it in 1808 in European tactics and had twenty cannon forged at Isfahan. He found that "the Iranian soldier is sober, obedient, withstands fatigue and needs to be ordered and given examples."<sup>580</sup> Equipment such as matchlocks and artillery was of poor quality, and the Russians (after some early setbacks) prevailed decisively in the wars of 1810-13 and 1826-28.

For a brief time under Amir Kabir around 1850 the army was systematically recruited, better trained and regularly paid. Its theoretical strength of 100,000 infantry and 30,000 cavalry remained far above its actual size of perhaps 20,000 men.<sup>581</sup> This force quelled revolts in 1850 but degenerated again soon after Amir Kabir's downfall and had to back down under English pressure over Afghanistan in 1853-56. The dilapidated military institution ate up some 41 percent of the state's budget in 1868,<sup>582</sup> and abuses increased here as elsewhere in the government in the 1890s. The shah's son, Kamran Mirza, controlled about one-half of the state's budget as commander-in-chief of a paper army of 90-100,000 soldiers, but in reality as few as 15,000. These funds were lent out in profit schemes in the bazaar at high rates, while soldiers went half-starved and had to engage in manual labor to survive. By 1900 the army—apart from the Russian-trained Cossack Brigade of about 10,000 fairly efficient troops—was reduced to a 2,000-man personal bodyguard. As one shah said, "I have neither an army nor the ammunition to supply an army." The military preparedness

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, 436.

<sup>579</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 131.

<sup>580</sup> Gardane is cited in French by Savory, "British and French Diplomacy," 34, translation mine.

<sup>581</sup> Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer," 94-95.

<sup>582</sup> Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 32.

and discipline of the soldiers were slight or non-existent.<sup>583</sup>

Abrahamian has argued that the Qajars relied on a weak, fragmented society, carefully kept in equilibrium by a policy of "divide and rule," and that this obviated the need for either a standing army or a well-developed bureaucracy.<sup>584</sup> The Qajar state, nevertheless—or as a result—was clearly smaller, less in control and far more venal than its Safavid predecessor. Its underlying lack of strength reposed in large measure on its nearly permanent situation of fiscal crisis. This in turn derived in part from its weakness within the world-system and led to legitimation problems vis-a-vis civil society, topics which we shall now explore in turn.

### III.B. Fiscal Crisis: A Secular Trend

Fiscal crises occurred with some regularity in Qajar Iran, especially in two waves, from the 1820s to 1850 and from the 1880s onward. Table 4.20 gives an overview of some estimates on the size of Iran's revenues from 1800 to 1907.

Table 4.20  
Revenues of the Iranian State, 1800-1907

Year	Estimator	Revenues in Tumans	Revenues in Pounds Sterling
1807	Gardane	2,000,000+	2,000,000+
1810/11	Malcolm	--	3,000,000
1820	Fraser	2,500,000	2,200,000
1836	Issawi	2,461,000	--
1839/40	Rabino	3,402,615	1,835,994
1853/54	Rabino	3,368,558	1,153,163
1868	Thomson	5,012,500	1,965,000
1876/77	Rabino	5,070,000	1,950,800
1888/89	Curzon	5,531,000	1,653,000
1907	Jamalzadeh	8,000,000	1,538,000

Sources: Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 54; Rabino, "Banking in Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 352; Issawi, "Population and Resources," 389 note 46.

<sup>583</sup> Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism," 11 (for the quote); Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 269, 275-76; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 15.

<sup>584</sup> Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism," 31.

The table suggests that income held steady at around two million tumans from ca. 1800 to 1836, then jumped to three million from 1839 to the 1850s, reached five million by 1868 and stayed at this level into the 1890s, then jumped again to eight million by 1907. Interestingly, due to the depreciation of the Iranian currency, the state revenues expressed in pounds sterling reached their peak of three million in 1810, declined to 2.2 million in 1820, and never surpassed two million for the rest of the century, reaching in fact their *lowest* level in 1907 of just over 1.5 million pounds sterling. As the Iranian state and economy became enmeshed in the world system over this period, presumably the weight of this decline was felt fiscally despite the gains in terms of tumans. The sources of this state income were above all the land tax, 78 percent of total revenues according to Thomson in 1868, and the customs at about 11 percent; by 1911 the customs were up to over 40 percent of the total.<sup>585</sup> In 1868 the wealthiest provinces in terms of taxes paid were Azerbaijan, which contributed 14.2 percent of the state's total revenues, followed by Gilan (10 percent), Isfahan (9.6 percent), and Khurasan, Khuzistan, Kirman, Kirmanshah and Tehran, each contributing about 5 percent.<sup>586</sup>

The first reports of a fiscal crisis of the state go back to the 1820s, when Fraser spoke of "the deficiency in revenue."<sup>587</sup> This shortfall developed into a full-blown crisis in the early 1830s due to the wars with Russia which both removed some of the revenue base by taking Iranian territories and saddled Iran with a large war indemnity to pay. Provinces such as Fars fell substantially into arrears on their tax payments in this decade; bad harvests, diseases and famine all damaged the revenue base of a government depending heavily on land taxes; the army and bureaucracy went unpaid. Lambton judges that "From the reign of Muḥammad Shāh (1834-48) onwards there were repeated financial crises."<sup>588</sup> Under his rapacious minister Hajji Mirza Aqasi the sale of offices mushroomed but the deficit continued to widen apace, reaching one million tumans in 1848.<sup>589</sup> Amir Kabir instituted financial reforms from 1848 to 1851, reducing pensions and civil service salaries, and perhaps

<sup>585</sup> Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 29-30; Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 571.

<sup>586</sup> Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Issawi, *EHI*, 29.

<sup>587</sup> Fraser is cited by Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 145-46 note 7.

<sup>588</sup> Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 237.

<sup>589</sup> Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xxii.

balancing the budget before his fall from grace (partly due to disgruntled officials and pensioners).<sup>590</sup> In 1868 Thomson's detailed budgetary analysis shows a surplus of 200,000 pounds sterling a year on revenues of about two million pounds.<sup>591</sup>

The situation unraveled definitively in the 1880s and 1890s, leading to a state of more or less permanent fiscal crisis. External pressures played a role in this: compensation for the cancelled tobacco concession led to the first large foreign loan in 1892, the depreciation and debasement of the tuman meant that increased tax rates still brought in less revenues; the collapse of silk production reduced the land revenue. Total public debt reached 7,650,000 pounds sterling in 1913, requiring annual servicing of 400-500,000 pounds, which ate up one quarter of all government revenues.<sup>592</sup> Internal factors included the shah's lavish spending on his harem and trips, both locally and to Europe; abuses in the customs and from tax-farming and sale of offices generally; the cut-rate sale of crown lands; and the wasted military expenditures for a paper army. The state seems to have gone into chronic fiscal crisis in the 1890s, acquiring a permanent deficit of about 300,000 tumans (60,000 pounds sterling).<sup>593</sup> In the 15 years before the Constitutional Revolution broke out in 1905, the deficit climbed by ten times to three million tumans, or 600,000 pounds sterling.<sup>594</sup> The fiscal crises, and the desperate measures to which they gave rise—foreign borrowing and concessions, debasement of the currency and the abuses and corruption attending the sale of offices—fueled political discontent, and as such contributed to the de-legitimation of the Qajar state and the background to the Constitutional Movement.

<sup>590</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 453-54; Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer," 92-93.

<sup>591</sup> Thomson, "Report on Persia," in Isawi, *EHI*, 31-32.

<sup>592</sup> Isawi, *EHI*, 128, 339. He points out that this was a lesser revenue/debt ratio than Egypt (1/2) or Turkey (1/3) but Iran had almost no productive investments to show for its debt.

<sup>593</sup> Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 279.

<sup>594</sup> Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1910), 240.

### III.C. The Qajar State and Western Powers

Here we shall briefly refocus the several threads of our narrative that have already largely told the story of the Qajars' relations with the West. The prospect of foreign domination, commercial and political, was recognized by the Iranian state early in the nineteenth century. We have seen Muhammad Shah's wish in 1837 to relate to Great Britain and Russia "on a footing of equal friendship. What he cherishes above all [said his ambassador] is his independence, and the maintenance of good relations with foreign powers."<sup>595</sup> We may recall the resistance of Fath 'Ali Shah and Muhammad Shah to the signing of a commercial treaty with the British and the granting of consuls to the Russians in the 1820s and 1830s. It took the hostilities of 1839-41 with England over Afghanistan to secure the commercial treaty. Protectionist efforts to preserve Iranian handicrafts against European imports were largely abandoned at this time: "The Shah is reported to have said that he had in vain endeavoured to encourage Manufactures in this Country and that now he must be content with the encreased Duties which the European Trade brought to the State however much the Country suffered by that Trade."<sup>596</sup> The Qajars forged no consistent, predictable trade policy, and, unlike in India and Egypt, "the central government did not form a policy with regard to the allocation of resources in the agricultural sector. In general terms this was left to be determined by market forces alone."<sup>597</sup> Instead, the Russians had battered down the tariff walls in their two wars with Iran, and England widened the breach with its 1841 treaty, to be followed by a host of other European countries and the United States, all recognized with "most favored nation" status.

This struggle over economic independence was largely lost by mid-century. Ceasing to resist the foreigners, the Qajars entered into more deeply dependent relations with them through a series of concessions, agreements and loans. Whether or not he was simply dazzled by what he saw in the West on his trips in 1873, 1879 and 1889, as Bausani suggests, Nasir al-Din's choices were very limited.<sup>598</sup> He was in effect forced to place his hopes in such schemes as the Reuter concession.

<sup>595</sup> Cited in Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 124.

<sup>596</sup> "Abbott to Aberdeen," September 30, 1840, in Issawi, *EHI*, 112.

<sup>597</sup> Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture," 342. See also Lambton, "Persian Trade under the Early Qājārs," 225-26, 243, on the lack of any state trade policy.

<sup>598</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 167.

Nāṣir ud-Dīn, realizing that Persia could not transform herself without foreign help and that, in any case, foreign intervention could not be prevented, conceived, therefore, a policy of inducing foreign powers to invest in Persia in the hope that they would contribute to the development and prosperity of Persia because they had a stake in the well-being of the country themselves.<sup>599</sup>

Neither the shah nor the bureaucracy could extricate themselves from the web of obligations and rewards that the concessions, tariffs, loans and other economic projects spun around them. Russian fears of English commercial gains led to the agreements with Iran not to develop railroads. Iranian fears of English and Russian military superiority, Gilbar suggests, undergirded the state's disinterest in improving its transportation network from the 1860s to the 1890s. The result was limited development, and development dependent on terms set by the Europeans, with their economic, technological, transportation and military advantages.

These facets of dependence naturally spilled over into the political realm as well. The Russians were the predominant influence at the Qajar court from 1896 on, controlling much of the policy room for maneuver of Muzaffar al-Din Shah and his son Muhammad 'Ali who assumed the throne at a critical juncture in the Constitutional Revolution early in 1907. The British too provided military and administrative advisers to the court, and used the Imperial Bank of Persia to extend or withhold loans to erstwhile provincial governors. Mehrain contends that the Qajar court, despite its contact with foreigners, did not depend on them (she makes it part of the "Asiatic" and not a capitalist class).<sup>600</sup> I have conceptualized the shah as involved in several modes of production—above all agrarian, but also tribal and urban—and while not itself "capitalist" to any great degree in this period, the Qajar state *was* enmeshed in a capitalist world-system upon which it was largely dependent. Nowshirvani's thesis is that this incorporation process, which he terms the "commercialization" of Qajar Iran, was a key step toward modernization and centralization of the state.<sup>601</sup> This too misses the fundamental nature of dependency. While contact with the world economy did create pressure for reforms and the elaboration of some new institutions, it did not result in any successful centralization of the Qajar polity. The Qajars' misfortune was that they were neither too strong (like

<sup>599</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 125.

<sup>600</sup> Mehrain, "Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," ca. 120.

<sup>601</sup> Nowshirvani, "The Beginnings of Commercialized Agriculture," 557.

the Safavids) nor too remote (like the eighteenth-century "dynasties") to be directly dominated.

Instead, capitalism came to them from the outside in the guise of two strong rivals, Great Britain and Russia, who completely disaggregated their dreams of strong central control internally.

### III.D. Legitimation Problems

**The absolutist project.** An 1838 letter from Mirza 'Ali, deputy minister for foreign affairs, to the British minister expresses the absolutist claims of the Qajar dynasty:

... the Monarchs of Persia, as far back as memory reaches, or is preserved in history, have always been despotic over Persian subjects, in like manner over their lives, and property, and families, and reputations, and lands, and goods: so that even if they should order a thousand innocent persons to be put to death, it would be in no one's power to call them to account.<sup>602</sup>

The trappings of royal power, displayed in court ceremony, were designed to convey all of this.

Malcolm describes the scene:

In no court is more rigid attention paid to ceremony. Looks, words, the motions of the body, all are regulated by the strictest forms. When the king is seated in public, his sons, ministers and courtiers, stand erect, with their hands crossed, and in the exact place belonging to their rank.... Nothing can exceed the splendour of the Persian court on extraordinary occasions.<sup>603</sup>

Pre-Islamic culture and symbolism were drawn on to a greater extent than ever before, with the Qajars evoking the glory of the Sassanid dynasty—Fath 'Ali Shah wanted to be portrayed next to the Sassanid bas-reliefs at Taq-i Bustan, and one of the first books translated from a Western language into Persian was Rawlinson's *The Seventh Great Monarchy*, on the Sassanids.<sup>604</sup>

The reality of Qajar power fell far short of its projected ideal. As Abrahamian notes:

The Qajars ... were despots without the instruments of despotism; Shadows of God on Earth whose writ did not extend far beyond the capital; Kings of Kings who trembled before armed demonstrators; and absolutists ruling with the kind permission of the provincial magnates, the religious dignitaries, and the local officials.<sup>605</sup>

<sup>602</sup> Mirza 'Ali to Mr. McNeill, January 8, 1838, cited by Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 128.

<sup>603</sup> Malcolm, *History of Persia* (1829 edition), II, 399-400, cited by Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 129, small corrections mine.

<sup>604</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 164, 168.

<sup>605</sup> Abrahamian, "Oriental Despotism," 13.

The state's centralizing project was circumscribed, not just by the economic power of the West, but by serious inroads into its prestige internally in Iranian society. As we shall see, the two were inter-related.

**The ulama and the state.** A key step in the erosion of the Qajars' absolutist ideal was taken with the separation of religious and political sources of legitimation in the first part of the nineteenth century. The ruler was recognized by eminent mujtahids such as Mirza Abu'l-Qasim Qumi (d. 1817/18) as "the Shadow of God on earth," but not for any divine attributes, and not as the deputy of the Hidden Imam. Nor was he infallible, but rather answerable to God for any evil doing, and responsible for administering justice and equity. Herein lies an incipient differentiation of political and religious functions: "kings were needed for the preservation of order, the '*ulama*' for the protection of religion."<sup>606</sup> The political theory of separation of powers and legitimation of the shah's authority was established largely by Aqa Sayyid Ja'far ibn Abi Ishaq Kashfi (d. 1850/51). This is essentially a dualistic conception of legitimate authority—the rulers have political leadership of the community, the ulama have religious leadership. The shah was legitimized as the "Shadow of God on Earth" in the temporal realm, while the court acknowledged that the most eminent of the mujtahids was the "viceregent of the Imam."<sup>607</sup>

Arjomand deems it "truly absurd" to hold that temporal rule is illegitimate during the Hidden Imam's long period of occultation, as long as the ruler does not claim the religious authority of the Imam.<sup>608</sup> There was a crucial, somewhat indeterminate, area of overlap, however: the shah was technically subordinate, like any other believer, to the guidance of a leading mujtahid as his *marja'-i taqlid* (source of imitation).<sup>609</sup> Yet he was also considered the "King of Islam and of the Shi'ite nation," responsible for protecting Islam against encroachment by infidels.<sup>610</sup> Thus, there is as usual a degree of ambiguity in Shi'ism's political implications: separation of politics and religion, or state

<sup>606</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 223.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, 225, 229. See also Lambton, "Quis Custodiet Custodes," part 2, 143, and Cole, "Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722-1780," 26-27.

<sup>608</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 234.

<sup>609</sup> Hamid Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama in Twentieth-Century Iran," pp. 231-255 in Nikki Keddie, editor, *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions since 1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), 235.

<sup>610</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 251-52.

and ulama, made confrontation as well as cooperation possible.

In the course of the nineteenth century, relations between state and ulama oscillated between these poles, gradually crystallizing in fairly widespread ulama criticism of and disenchantment with, the Qajar state. Fath 'Ali Shah was generally considered very pious and even respected as a religious scholar of sorts, yet his reign witnessed the murder of the Russian envoy Griboyedov, an early instance of the shah being perceived as derelict in his duties to protect the nation of Islam.<sup>611</sup> Tensions mounted higher in Muhammad Shah's reign from 1834 to 1848: the sack of Karbala by the Ottoman governor of Arab Iraq in 1843 prompted the cleric Shafi'i to announce he would dispatch an army against Baghdad "whatever the intention of the shah" (in fact, however, he never did).<sup>612</sup> At this time it was rumored that Qajars had been in the Umayyad army that slew Imam Husayn at Karbala in the seventh century.<sup>613</sup> From the 1850s to the 1880s Arjomand discerns a lull in which the state was dominant and the ulama cooperative, with few tensions. Many close ulama ties developed with the Qajar political elite.<sup>614</sup> But a counter-trend was at work as well: the Qajars were perceived as progressively associating themselves with non-Muslim powers who wanted to destroy the Islamic community of Iran.<sup>615</sup> Thus Mulla 'Ali Kani reprimanded the shah on behalf of the merchant community in 1873 for his foreign concession granting.<sup>616</sup> The ulama-led Tobacco Rebellion will be studied in Chapter Five. In 1902, leading ulama told the British minister in Tehran that they were "very much disappointed with the subserviency of the Shah and Grand Vizier to Russia, and especially with the second Russian loan, and talk openly of excommunicating (which means practically deposing) the Shah," unless the policy was changed.<sup>617</sup> Congruent with the earlier symbolic linking of the Qajars to anti-Shi'i actions was the rumor current during the Constitutional Revolution that the dagger used to kill Husayn was in the possession of the Governor of Tehran, 'Ala al-Dauleh.<sup>618</sup>

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, 218, 252.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>613</sup> Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama," 233.

<sup>614</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 248.

<sup>615</sup> Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama," 236.

<sup>616</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 252.

<sup>617</sup> Wright, *The Persians Amongst the English*, xvii, citing a letter in the Public Record Office of August 27, 1902.

Thus by the turn of the twentieth century, the earlier separation of legitimate religious and political domination in Iranian society had evolved into increasing interventions by the ulama into politics as a result of perceptions that the state was faltering in its leadership by not confronting foreign powers in defense of the Shi'i nation. As Arjomand notes: "The threat came from without: in the form of imperialist penetration, and of the impact of the West on the modernization of the state."<sup>619</sup>

**State and society.** The Qajars thus moved from a situation of unpopularity within Iran to one of spreading belief in their patent illegitimacy. According to Fraser they were already unpopular rulers in the 1820s and 1830s, seen as unconcerned with the people, unwilling to finance public works, and seeking only to tax the provinces for all they were worth.<sup>620</sup> They never overcame this sentiment, which by the last quarter of the century was linked to the resentment of significant sectors of the urban population—merchants, artisans, ulama—against foreign domination of Iran's economy, polity and culture. Parallel to the dominant critique of the Qajars as failing to safeguard Islam against infidels, was the intelligentsia's contention that arbitrary rule should be checked by the rule of law, and eventually a constitution. Tribal autonomy too was a factor precluding successful imposition of the state's absolutist project on Iranian society. These diverse currents undermined Qajar legitimacy, and provided rationales for action in the social movements of the late Qajar period.

#### IV. Conclusions to Chapter Four: The Nature of Dependency

We have come a long way in this chapter—with apologies to readers!—and can now conclude with a brief stock-taking of what has been established. Each of the three sections of this chapter had an empirical referent and made a theoretical contribution. Section I examined the external relations of Iran, tracing a growing commercial and political dependence on Russia and Great Britain. Theoretically we saw Iran's transition from an external arena largely outside the ambit of the world-economy to an increasingly integrated peripheral role in the capitalist world-economy, as supplier of

<sup>618</sup> Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama," 233.

<sup>619</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 265.

<sup>620</sup> Fraser, *Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia*, 204, 226.

raw materials—silk, opium, cotton, fruits and nuts, and so on—and one “traditional” manufacture—carpets—and consumer of manufactured imports—textiles, hardware and processed agricultural products such as sugar and tea. Section II delineated developments in each of the three major sectors of the Iranian economy—the peasant, tribal and urban—and allowed us to evaluate the internal impact of growing trade with the West on the various groups and social classes that constituted these sectors. Theoretically, change and stasis in the Iranian social formation was observed: the three modes of production that combined in the period from 1500 to 1800 were preserved, although the petty-commodity mode of craft production was heavily undermined by the Western imports, and agriculture turned increasingly to the cultivation of crops for export. Relations of exchange rather than production were most affected. Meanwhile, a small new capitalist mode of production emerged, with certain unique historical features: foreign capital was prevalent at the top, and an Iranian working class formed partly outside the country in Russia. Section III assessed the institutions and power bases of the Qajar state. Its growing weakness vis-a-vis Western states and their more powerful armies and economies was established, and linked to processes of fiscal crisis and delegitimation internally.

Throughout this chapter I have tried to make a case for the concept of dependent development as a heuristic device for answering the questions posed at the beginning: how much and what type of development occurred in Qajar Iran? This period has found a number of good historians but has been plagued by problems of conceptualization and interpretation. Two very different judgments have arisen: on the one hand, Nowshirvani, Gilbar and Nashat have advanced analyses highlighting *progress*, in terms of “commercialization of agriculture,” “modernization of institutions,” “rise in per capita incomes,” and so forth. On the other hand, Issawi, Bharier and Keddie have painted more sober portraits emphasizing “relative economic stagnation and very slow development,” especially compared with Egypt and the Ottoman empire. A third group of scholars, including Seyf, Ashraf, Anna Enayat and Amanat, have come closer, but never fully or explicitly enough, to the perspective employed in this chapter. Namely, as the term “dependent development” suggests, Iran experienced both growth and limits to growth, economic “development” and dependency on external forces,

absolute *increases* in numerous key indicators—population, gross domestic product, foreign trade—but entailing significant negative repercussions on standards of living, balance of payments, inflation, the state budget, employment in the crafts, and so on.

Finally, another debate raging in the literature—on whether the “economic” or “political” side of imperialism was dominant—can also be cast in a new light. While most historiography of Iran, led by Kazemzadeh, Greaves, Entner, Lambton and even the Marxist Fred Halliday, has come down on the side of the political and strategic underpinnings of Russian and British activity in Iran, Kumar has taken strong issue with this in arguing for the economic motivations of imperial control. A few writers—Gillard, Platt and Hurewitz—have adopted a more sophisticated view that still seems to emphasize the political, while two others—Paine and Anna Enayat—have more consistently to a balance of both factors. Though this debate warrants fuller discussion, the general solution suggested by the dependency perspective is that these factors are inseparable and to argue which takes precedence is unfruitful. We have seen that dependence has political, economic and ideological aspects. It was imposed by military power, channelled into economic domination, and ended in substantial political and strategic control of the Western powers Russia and Great Britain, over Iran. But the story does not in fact end here. In Chapter Five we shall reassess the period in terms of the social movements that occurred, largely as *responses to dependency*, directed against the twin forces of domination in late nineteenth-century Iran: the Qajar state and foreign encroachment.

## Chapter Five

### Reform, Rebellion, Revolution, Coup:

#### Social Movements in Qajar Iran

There appear to be two distinct and opposing causes for these disturbances.

On the one hand the partisans of Malkom Khan who share his "liberal" and "reforming" views, chiefly perhaps for the purpose of attacking the Shah's Chief Minister, are trying to open the eyes of the nation to the tyrannical and corrupt form of Govt under which they are living, and to imbue the people with an idea of democratic power; on the other, the fanatical Mollahs, taking advantage of Ramazan, are preaching everywhere against the surrender of the Faithful into the hands of the Infidels. Trade of all kinds, Mines, Banks, Tobacco, Roads, are, it is said, sold to Europeans, who will gradually obtain corn land and even Mussulman women.

—Report by the British minister Kennedy, April 29, 1891, cited by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 57.

\* \* \*

Is there any other nation which has shown so much vital force and so much perseverance in the aspirations which have sometimes cost it dear? What nation has undergone so much tyranny and violence and still remained staunch to its ancient traditions? We deserve your sympathy, honourable representatives of the civilised nations, for we have always been ready to lay down our lives to save our country from the yoke of tyrants. If till now we have been unsuccessful in realising these aspirations it is because till now we had not tasted the divine fruit of unions and harmony.

—"A Petition from Iranian Reformers to the Foreign Representatives in Tehran in Early 1892," cited by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 153-154.

The purpose of this chapter is to give an analytic account of the main movements for social change in Iran in the period from 1800 to 1925, focusing in particular on the events of 1890 to 1925—the Tobacco Rebellion, the Constitutional Revolution, the radical local movements during and after World War I and Reza Khan's coup. The title "Reform, Rebellion, Revolution, Coup" hints at the progression of steadily more dramatic events. The failure of the state's reform efforts to cope with growing grievances from below and increasing foreign penetration led to the first nationwide mass movement, the Tobacco Rebellion of 1890-92. This proved to be the dress rehearsal for a more prolonged conflict, the Constitutional Movement or Revolution, from 1905 to 1911, which began with the grant of a national assembly and constitution but ended when Russian troops moved into Iran to disband the one and abrogate the other, propping up a weakened Qajar monarchy. The collapse of this attempted revolution was followed by military occupation, crop failures and famine during World War I, and the ensuing local rebellions, aggrandizing maneuvers of Great Britain and weakness of the Qajar state created the environment for a centralizing military coup in 1921 and its commander's establishment of a new, Pahlavi dynasty in 1925.

For each of these major social movements we shall investigate the underlying causes, principal social actors, and reasons for the outcome. The complexity of Iranian social structure, with its division into three (and then four) modes of production and some 16 or more constituent social classes or groups, dictated the necessity of alliances on both sides of all social movements. Different groups and classes articulated a range of grievances against the state, internal, and foreign domination, and these common targets led to a pattern in most social movements of broad, "populist" multi-class alliances to get them under way. Initial successes however were often followed by the emergence of internal differences in the revolutionary coalition and external interference from threatened foreign powers, which together limited the outcome as in the case of the Tobacco Rebellion, or reversed it altogether as in the Constitutional Revolution.

The approach of this chapter to social movements thus relies on the groundwork laid in Chapter Four on social class formation in the nineteenth century to clarify who was benefitting and who suffering as Iran became more closely integrated into the capitalist world system and dependent

on Russia and Great Britain. The tentative classes-for-themselves that formed and coalesced, or ultimately failed to do so in these struggles for the hearts and minds of key groups—the ulama, artisans, merchants and marginal urban classes—also indicates the importance of the subjective factors of political consciousness and culture.

### **I. Succession Struggles and Uprisings, 1800-1850: From Traditional to Transitional Forms of Protest**

The succession struggles of 1797, 1834 and 1848, as well as the later one of 1896, were brief moments of concern that the designated heir might be displaced by a brother or uncle upon the death of the reigning shah. They were basically a traditional and rather limited form of “change,” and were each time decided in favor of the heir, although interestingly, in 1834 and 1896 this required some Russian and British help. Likewise, urban and tribal revolts, riots and unrest punctuated the entire nineteenth century and were not significantly different from similar occurrences in the period from 1500 to 1800 already assessed in Chapter Three. The murder of the Russian envoy Griboyedov by an angry crowd in 1829 may be singled out however as a *transitional* (partly traditional, partly new) type of social movement, entailing an act undertaken against foreign domination expressed largely in religious terms. On a far wider scale the Babi revolts of 1848-53 were likewise transitional to more modern mass movements, again expressed in a religious (but anti-ulama) mode, this time directed against the Qajar state.

#### **I.A. Succession Struggles**

Between the murder of Aqa Muhammad Shah in his camp on June 17, 1797 and the coronation of his nephew Fath 'Ali Shah on March 21, 1798, claims were made on the throne by the dead shah's brother and by a non-Qajar tribal chief. These were thwarted by the timely action of Hajji Ibrahim Khan, Aqa Muhammad's chief minister, who gathered the remnants of the scattered Qajar army and proved loyal to the crown prince.<sup>1</sup> This was entirely an internal Iranian affair, with intra-

<sup>1</sup> Hasan-i Fasa'i, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*, translated from the Persian by Heribert Busse (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 72-81.

elite tribal and factional contenders.

The 1834 succession was marked by significant external support for the heir apparent by Britain and Russia. The 1828 Treaty of Turkmanchai had explicitly confirmed 'Abbas Mirza as Fath 'Ali Shah's heir; when 'Abbas Mirza died in 1833, the British and Russian ministers pledged themselves to support Fath 'Ali's choice of 'Abbas's son Muhammad Mirza as crown prince. Fath 'Ali Shah himself died four months later on October 23, 1834, and a dispute ensued when Husain 'Ali Mirza, governor of Fars, claimed the throne. The Russians and British encouraged Muhammad Mirza to march from Tabriz on November 16, accompanied by their envoys (who resided at Tabriz, where 'Abbas Mirza had been foreign minister since 1810). Tehran was "taken" in December, and an expedition dispatched to subdue the pretender.<sup>2</sup> In this case foreign support proved a decisive factor, both in the nomination of the successor and enforcement of his claim.

The other two successions of the nineteenth century did not go uncontested either. When Muhammad Shah died on September 4, 1848, there were already revolts going on in the provinces, both by Qajar governor-princes and tribal chiefs. Amir Kabir, chief minister of sixteen year-old Nasir al-Din, who had been the crown prince only since March, persuaded the merchant community of Tabriz to loan the funds necessary for the trip to Tehran, where Nasir al-Din took the throne on October 20, 1848 without bloodshed.<sup>3</sup> At the close of Nasir al-Din's long reign, which ended with his assassination in 1896, both Zil al-Sultan (the shah's eldest son, but not the son of a princess) and Kamran Mirza (the younger brother of the crown prince), were interested in contesting the crown, but the joint efforts of the powerful prime minister Amin al-Sultan and the expressed support of the Russian and British embassies for the crown prince, backed by the Russian-trained and officered Cossack Brigade, secured the throne for Muzaffar al-Din Shah.<sup>4</sup>

What was "traditional" in each of these four succession crises were the inter- and intra-tribal conflicts surrounding the issue of which member of the royal family would succeed. What was

<sup>2</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 446-48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 451-52; Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer of the Nineteenth Century," 88-90.

<sup>4</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 69.

transitional to the modern epoch was the growing foreign role evidenced by the weight of foreign diplomatic pressure, and, by 1896, a Russian-trained Iranian military unit. The increased involvement of the West in 1834 prefigures the Qajars' shrinking scope of action and early stages of the dependence which would become so marked by the end of the century.

### **I.B. Urban and Tribal Unrest**

Instances of small-scale, local social struggles and political conflicts continued to be quite common in the Qajar period, just as they had been in the long Safavid era from 1500 to 1800. Ashraf and Hekmat note that "According to one account, there were 169 incidents of rebellion, unrest, sedition, and local war during the first forty years of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shah's reign,"<sup>5</sup> i.e. from 1848 to 1888. Though difficult to quantify, such events would seem to have been fully as numerous in the first half of the nineteenth century as well.

The record of tribal unrest, including local rebellions, raids on towns and villages, and inter- and intra-tribal feuds and struggles, is a long one.<sup>6</sup> The Turcomans of Khurasan and beyond into what would become Russian Central Asia, were particularly turbulent. The Afghans incited rebellions in this region in 1813, and the area remained troubled into the 1830s, with 'Abbas Mirza having to put down a rebellion there in 1830-31. In 1835, simultaneous tribal raids and incursions were carried out by the Kurds in Azarbaijan, the Baluchis in Kirman, and the Turcomans in Khurasan.<sup>7</sup> To a certain degree the Qajar state coped by gaining the loyalty of tribal khans, particularly in the northwest, south and center, with appointments to local office and land grants; in other areas, such as the northeast and southeast, the tribes remained rather autonomous and outside effective central control. No tribal rebellion led to full local independence or the successful establishment of a new dynasty, however, reflecting less on the forcefulness of the Qajar state than on the diminished aspirations of tribal leaders and the declining centrality of the tribal population in the overall Iranian social

<sup>5</sup> Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 730, based on I'timad al-Sultanah, *Al-Mu'athir va al-Athar* (Tehran, 1307 Hijri/1890), 37-52.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Fasa'i, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*, passim.

<sup>7</sup> Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society," 444, 446, 448.

formation, a demographic and economic trend chronicled in Chapter Four.

Even more common (or perhaps merely better documented) were the numerous outbreaks of urban disturbances of several sorts. In Chapter Four we saw such cases of urban unrest as merchants' protests against foreign economic penetration at Kashan and Tabriz in 1844, and of anti-minority strife against Armenians, Zoroastrians and Jews from 1815 to the 1830s. More serious challenges to the political order itself occurred at Kirman and Yazd in 1830-31, Isfahan in 1835, Shiraz in 1840, Kirman in 1842, a half dozen or more cities in 1848, Tabriz in 1855-57, and Shiraz again from 1865 to 1867. These were most often expressions of public dissatisfaction with provincial authorities over such issues as excessive tax burdens, high food prices and shortages of bread, unpopular governors, and so on.<sup>8</sup> To judge by the Shiraz revolt of 1840, about which relatively more data is available, protests against unjust governors were initiated and carried through by the artisans, shopkeepers and urban poor, who had to enlist the support of higher-ranking classes such as the ulama, merchants and local notables (the last often engaged in personal rivalries with the authorities). Their goals were generally limited to the correction of specific abuses, but if these were not met (as was frequently the case given the haughty bearing of provincial governors), they might arm themselves, close the bazaar, escalate their demands to the removal of the governor, and create a situation of ungovernability until the shah replaced the governor. Such "limited objective movements," even when successful, thus stopped short of becoming fully revolutionary in scope, and were always confined to their urban or regional setting.<sup>9</sup>

One urban incident which acquires heightened interest in light of subsequent social movements was the murder in 1829 of the Russian envoy Griboyedov. Griboyedov, "a dramatist noted for his contempt of all Asians, especially Iranians,"<sup>10</sup> had been dispatched to Tehran to carry out the provisions of the Treaty of Turkmanchai in the immediate aftermath of Iran's defeat in the second Russian

<sup>8</sup> These events are mentioned or discussed in *ibid.*, 446, 448, 450, 452, 455; Fasa'i, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*, 283-87, 356-57; Algar, *Religion and State*, 111-112; and Muhammad Reza Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution within the Framework of Iranian History," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Temple University (1981), 145 note 1, 148.

<sup>9</sup> Afshari, "The *Pīshvarān* and Merchants," 143-45, 151. On Shiraz in 1840, see also Fasa'i, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*, 262-67.

<sup>10</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 71.

war. The distaste of Iranians for this already unpopular mission was compounded by Griboyedov's arrogance at court and the unruly behavior of his Cossack bodyguard, members of which appeared drunk in public. Matters took a serious turn when he tried to strictly enforce article 13 of the treaty, which provided for the release of all prisoners of war, no matter when they had been taken. This was used as a pretext for the questioning of Armenians and Georgians serving in the households of high-ranking Iranian officials, some of whom had been in that capacity for years, converting to Islam and raising families. The key incident was the holding and interrogation of two Georgian women from the harem of Asaf al-Daula, a Qajar prince. When the story spread that they were being held there against their will, the ulama, led by Hajji Mirza Masih issued a *fatva* (religious injunction) that made lawful the rescue of Muslim women from the hands of unbelievers. The next day the bazaar was closed and a large crowd marched to Griboyedov's house. Though the two women were released, the Cossacks fired on the crowd, killing a 14 year-old boy. Beyond control, the crowd then stormed the house, killing all its inhabitants except Maltsov, a deputy.<sup>11</sup>

The significance of this event has at least two dimensions. For Hamid Algar, it was "the first clear confrontation between the government and the people.... The government became increasingly suspected of treason and cooperation with foreign, non-Muslim powers; the ulama were the natural leaders of opposition to it."<sup>12</sup> The Qajar state indeed erred by omission in not leading the resistance to the Russian demands: the Qajar's court historian recorded that "The [populace] said bluntly ... if the government should order us [to act] against our will, we shall collectively abjure allegiance to the king."<sup>13</sup> The second, and perhaps central, significance of the incident itself was clearly Iranian popular resistance to Russian domination and power. Nikki Keddie sees it as "the first anti-foreign incident of religious inspiration, which embodied the resentment of many Iranians against their treatment by Western powers."<sup>14</sup> Though neither state power nor foreign domination were seriously

<sup>11</sup> Accounts of the episode and the events leading up to it vary somewhat in their details. Two of the more detailed discussions are given by Fasa'i, *History of Persia under Qājār Rule*, 187-89, and especially, Algar, *Religion and State*, 95-99, who discusses the various alternate versions.

<sup>12</sup> Algar, *Religion and State*, 99.

<sup>13</sup> Reza Quli Khan Hidayat, *Rauzat al-Safa-yi Nasiri*, ten volumes (Tehran: 1339/1960-61), X, 708-9, cited and translated by Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 251.

<sup>14</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 46.

threatened in the short term, Qajar legitimacy was eroded somewhat, and resistance to the foreigners in Iran was manifested for the first time by a crowd of ordinary bazaar people seeking to defend their religious identity against overbearing non-believers. These sentiments would resurface sixty years later in the Tobacco Rebellion.

### **I.C. The Babi Revolts, 1848-53**

The most serious challenge to the Qajar state in the first half of the nineteenth century came during the first five years of Nasir al-Din Shah's reign in the form of the Babi revolts. These took the shape of armed uprisings against provincial and royal authority in the widely separated areas of Mazandaran (1848-49), Zanzan (1850) and Nairiz (1850 and 1853), in addition to an unsuccessful attempt on the shah's life in Tehran in 1852. In each case poorly armed but highly motivated fighters for the new faith of Babism held out against stronger governmental forces until they met final defeats due to starvation, attrition or deception. Debates have arisen over the traditional/religious or modern social and economic causes and significance of these revolts, as well as the composition of the social forces that followed the Babi leaders. While most writers agree that artisans and ulama participated, some see evidence of peasant mobilization as well, while others argue that *all* classes, including merchants and upper class groups, were attracted to Babism. Our concept of a *transitional* social movement will help adjudicate the first of these debates, and a critical look at the available evidence will aid in clarifying the debate on the classes and groups involved. Consideration of the ideological content of Babism and the political culture of the movement further substantiates its mixed (but not indiscriminate) social bases and transitional nature.

The founder of Babism, Mirza 'Ali Muhammad, was born into a merchant family at Shiraz in 1819. After a religious upbringing, he went to Bushire where he worked as a trader for one to five years. He then gave this up and went to Karbala in Iraq for further religious studies, becoming a disciple of Sayyid Kazim Rashti. Rashti was the leader of Shaikhism, a recent trend within Shi'ism based on the idea that there must always be an intermediary—the Shi'i-yi kamal ("Perfect Shi'i")—between the Hidden Imam and believers. After Rashti died in 1844, Mirza 'Ali Muhammad, back in

Shiraz, proclaimed himself the Bab ("Gate") through whom the Hidden Imam would communicate, thus distancing his mission from orthodox Shi'ism and the Iranian ulama. He subsequently went even further, intimating that he was the expected Imam, the Mahdi, and eventually, by 1847, that he was a new prophet who superceded Muhammad, and that his book, the *Bayan* (Declaration) superceded the Quran. He was at first dismissed by the ulama in Shiraz as "a lunatic of no further consequence," but as he attracted patrons and followers including leading religious and political figures, he was harassed by the ulama, and finally ordered imprisoned by the shah. This embittered him toward the government and touched off the first uprisings in 1848, led by his disciples. Rather than quelling the excitement his movement had generated, his execution in 1850 led to further uprisings which did not fully end until 1853.<sup>15</sup>

Of particular relevance from a social movement point of view are the social and economic doctrines of the Bab and his revolutionary lieutenants. The Bab called for the realization of a Babi utopia in the provinces of Azarbaijan, Mazandaran, Khurasan, Fars and 'Iraq-i 'Ajam, in which only Babis would be allowed to live. The only exception, interestingly, would be made for foreign merchants, whose activity was held to benefit the community.<sup>16</sup> Rather than a pro-foreign measure, this was probably dictated more by the Bab's general admiration for merchants (his own class). He called specifically for the legalization of interest on loans, fixing of a unified money standard in the Babi lands, and inviolability of commercial correspondence. The need for good commercial roads, freedom of trade and security for one's property were further points on which the Bab favored merchants.<sup>17</sup> Tax and welfare pronouncements on the other hand advocated significant redistribution of income. Though not compelled to live austere, the upper classes were enjoined to give "surplus" wealth to the poor, and to pay a wealth tax of 19 percent to the Bab himself for welfare purposes. Moreover,

<sup>15</sup> This paragraph is based on Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 87ff., and Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 147ff.

<sup>16</sup> Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 106.

<sup>17</sup> V. Minorsky, "Persia: Religion and History," pp. 242-259 in V. Minorsky, *Iranica. Twenty Articles* (Tehran: University of Tehran Publication, volume 775, 1965), 254; Afshari, "The *Pishivarān* and Merchants," 146.

All lands of great value and all palaces must "return to God," for God is the sole owner of such properties. The Bab also declared it lawful to expropriate the land of unbelievers, who could reclaim their property only if and when they convert.<sup>18</sup>

The poor, orphans and widows were to be properly provided for. Women's status was made less unequal to that of men: men were limited to one wife unless the first proved infertile, in which case the first wife's consent was required before a second could be taken, and significantly, women could do the same if their husband was sterile. In Bayat's view, "Though he did not fully emancipate women, he allowed the sexes to socialize with some freedom, provided the reason was serious and not frivolous."<sup>19</sup> Though she denies that the Bab promised a wholly new economic order or social policy, still she characterizes his message as a "populist" one, which "implied a commitment to change in the poor's favor."<sup>20</sup>

While these reformist notions were themselves virtually unheard of in the context of mid-nineteenth century Iran, several of the Bab's disciples radicalized them still further in mobilizing the uprisings of 1848 to 1853. These included Mulla Husain Bushru'i, a cleric of Mazandaran entitled Bab al-Bab ("Gate to the Gate"); another Mazandarani mulla of peasant origin, Mirza Muhammad 'Ali Barfurushi, titled Quddus ("the Sacred"); and the charismatic woman preacher Qurrat al-'Ain. Ivanov claims that they extended the democratic elements in Babism, promoting "the abolition of all taxes, obligations, and private property and the introduction of common ownership and equality of woman and men."<sup>21</sup> At the 1848 pre-insurrectionary congress in Badasht, Qurrat al-'Ain threw off her veil and spoke of the necessity of freeing women from such restrictions, declaring "the coming of resurrection and the abeyance of the sacred law," and encouraging the audience to distinguish good from evil for themselves.<sup>22</sup> At the same meeting the equal sharing of the community's wealth was discussed, and thereafter practiced during the several uprisings. This was sometimes predicated on Barfurushi's proclamation that all things in the world belong to God and that private property was therefore usurpation.<sup>23</sup> The leader of the Zanzan revolt

<sup>18</sup> Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 106.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> M .S. Ivanov, articles on "Babism" and "Babi Uprisings" in *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, volume 2 (New York and London: Macmillan, 1973), 521.

<sup>22</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 255; Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 113-14; Afshari,

... commanded his followers that they should all be as one family and one household; and that all things, from eatables to clothing, whatever there was, should be divided for use; and his followers did even as he commanded so that they even opened their houses to one another, and passed in and out in unity and concord.<sup>24</sup>

The differences between the moderate reformist doctrines of the Bab and the more revolutionary ones of these leading disciples who took charge of the movement while he was in prison, may in part account for the eclectic appeal of Babism among various social strata, and the widely varying analyses of its "principal" social bases.

The standard position on the social bases of the revolts is that of Minorsky, who notes that "the new preaching was addressed definitely to the middle classes, to the petty bourgeoisie, the lesser clergy, and the traders."<sup>25</sup> More recently, Afshari has essentially agreed that the key social forces were the *pishivaran* (artisans and retail merchants), merchants and lower-rank clergy.<sup>26</sup> Arjomand, Amanat and Algar all concur in the importance of the ulama in the movement (though Amanat emphasizes "the young seminarians, overwhelmingly from humble social origins," while Algar observes that the vast majority of the ulama rejected the Bab's claims).<sup>27</sup> Two variants on this analysis extend it in different directions to the point of contradicting each other, however. The Soviet historians Kuznetsova and Ivanov make the significant addition of the *peasantry* to the middle strata of the bazaar (ulama, artisans, merchants), while Bausani and Bayat note the presence of *upper-class* landlords, high officials and "aristocrats" in the movement.<sup>28</sup> Moojan Momen caps this argument in a recent article on "The Social Basis of the Bābī Upheavals in Iran" by explicitly

"A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 151 note 1.

<sup>23</sup> V. Minorsky, "Review Essay on *The Babi Risings in Iran in 1848-1852* (M. S. Ivanov, 1939)," pp. 875-883 in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, volume 11 (1943-1946), 880; Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 116.

<sup>24</sup> E. G. Browne, "Personal Reminiscences of the Bābī Insurrection at Zanjān in 1850," pp. 761-827 in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, volume 19 (or 29?) (1897), 793, quoted in Moojan Momen, "The Social Basis of the Bābī Upheavals in Iran (1848-53): A Preliminary Analysis," pp. 157-183 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 15, number 2 (May 1983), 178.

<sup>25</sup> Minorsky, "Persia: Religion and History," 254.

<sup>26</sup> Afshari, "The *Pishivarān* and Merchants," 146.

<sup>27</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 254, referring to 'Abbas Amanat, "The Early Years of the Babi Movement: Background and Development," Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University (1981); Algar, *Religion und State*, 147-48.

<sup>28</sup> N. A. Kuznetsova, *Auza'-i Siyasi va Ijtima'-i-yi Iqtisadi-yi Iran dar Payun-i Sadeh-i Hijdahum ta Nimeh-i Nakhustin-i Sadeh-i Nuzdahum-i Miladi* [The Political and Socioeconomic Condition of Iran from the End of the Eighteenth Century till the Middle of the Nineteenth Century], translated from the Russian by S. Yazdani (Tehran: n.p., 1980), 143, cited by Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 162; Ivanov, "Babi Uprisings," 521; Bausani, *The Persians*, 166; Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 125.

discounting the participation of peasants (the few he finds having been manipulated by their landlords), concluding that otherwise "Those converted to Bābism were drawn from all social classes with a preponderance from the ulama, who also provided the leadership of the movement."<sup>29</sup>

A careful look at the excellent data compiled by Momen on the participants in the three major uprisings raises some problems with his interpretation however. Momen produces two breakdowns of the groups involved at the first uprising at Shaikh Tabarsi in Mazandaran. One, based on lists of 347 names, reveals in addition to the categories of major and minor ulama, artisans, "guilded" (i.e. small) merchants, nobility, landowners, high officials, large merchants and unskilled workers, some 61 "unclassified urban" and 73 "unclassified rural" participants. While it is difficult to apportion the 61 unclassified urban rebels under the seven urban occupations/classes, it is hard to see how the 73 unclassified rural participants could have been other than peasants. A second analysis of 180 Babis at Shaikh Tabarsi according to urban/rural origins shows 108 (22.5 percent) from large towns of over 22,000 inhabitants, 74 (15.4 percent) from medium towns of 7,000-22,000 people, 28 (5.8 percent) from small towns, and a majority (269 people) from villages. This suggests that 56 percent of the participants were peasants! Similarly, in Momen's data on 337 Babi rebels at Nairiz we find 227 (67.4 percent) as "unclassified (rural)," mostly fruit-growing peasants; and of a smaller sample of 68 Babis at Zanjan, 35 (51.5 percent) are "unclassified (rural)."<sup>30</sup> Table 5.1 aggregates Momen's data reclassifying rural participants as peasants, and further grouping the movement into its upper, middle and lower class components. Fragmentary as this data is, it suggests that not only did peasants participate in the Babi revolts, they did so in great numbers. These peasants may have been led in some cases by their local landlord or mulla into the revolts, they may have been coerced to a certain extent, and they probably came overwhelmingly from agricultural districts in the vicinity of the urban centers of revolt, but rebel they did. The next largest group of participants came, as most historians have noted, from the minor ulama (27.1 percent of the total sample), followed by artisans and small-scale ("guilded") merchants (12.3 percent). The numbers of landowners, urban officials

<sup>29</sup> Momen, "The Social Basis of the Bābī Uprising," 179, 177.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 162, 166, 168, 170.

Table 5.1  
Social Bases of the Babi Revolts

Class	Shaikh Tabarsi	Nairiz	Zanjan	Total	Percent
Nobility, Landowners, Officials	12	11	5	28	4.1
Major Ulama	14	6	7	27	3.9
Large Merchants	5	0	1	6	.9
Upper Class Totals	31	17	13	61	8.8
Minor Ulama	122	60	5	187	27.1
Artisans and Traders	48	25	12	85	12.3
Middle Class Totals	170	85	17	272	39.4
Unskilled Workers	6	3	3	12	1.7
Peasants	78	232	35	345	49.9
Tribespeople	1	0	0	1	.1
Lower Class Totals	85	235	38	358	51.8

Source: Momen, "The Social Basis of the Bābī Upheavals," 162, 168, 170, recoded by me.

and high-ranking ulama were much smaller, and the large merchants (supposedly favored by the Bab's pronouncements) accounted for less than one percent of the total. The level of upper-class participation (8.8 percent) comes close to reflecting the proportion of these groups in the total population, but they were far from being preponderant within the movement, as the radical views of the Bab's lieutenants after 1848 undoubtedly alienated the wealthy. A history written by a survivor of the Zanjan uprising notes that the poor were more active than the wealthy:

And as for the Bābīs, whichever of them were of the poorer classes of the town, or the traders or the sayyids or the *ṭullāb* [religious students] or others resisted the enemy with complete constancy, and began to build fortifications. Some who were of the rich, and wealth had become a veil for them, went over to the side of the Muslims...<sup>31</sup>

Women were active participants at Zanjan and Nairiz, dressing as men and fighting alongside them. Indeed, at the second Nairiz uprising in 1853, they appear to have outnumbered the men, who had died in great numbers in the first revolt there.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 170, citing a manuscript of Mirza Husain Zanjani.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-76, 167; Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 123.

This hypothesis that the Babi movement tended to be a fairly broad populist coalition of middle and lower class strata is bolstered by the available evidence on its popular culture and the political consciousness of participants. Bayat suggests three reasons for conversion: 1) many saw the Bab as the long-awaited Imam, 2) Sufis and Shaikhis saw him as a new spiritual master, 3) reformers and revolutionaries were attracted by the prospect of social change.<sup>33</sup> The first two of these appealed to certain members of the ulama and bazaar classes, and the third to radical intellectuals and dominated classes, while peasants (and others) may have adhered for both religious and political reasons. Difficult as it is to know what the mass of followers actually thought and felt, Afshari notes that "What impressed the people were the Babis' down-to-earth sense of justice, their uncompromising stands against the authorities, and their indomitable courage and fortitude."<sup>34</sup> The "this-worldliness" of Babism, as opposed to an emphasis on the past or the future, was "supremely attractive to many converts."<sup>35</sup> The revolutionary impact of the doctrine inhered in its exhortation that people try to better their lives in this world, and change the political and religious order:

To the poorer artisans and peasants, life in the small, tightly knit community of brothers in arms at Shaikh Tabarsi was a pre-taste of what the good life, which the Bab and his representatives repeatedly promised them, might be like.<sup>36</sup>

Bayat also discerns a degree of religious nationalism: Iranian centers of pilgrimage replaced Arab ones, the Persian *Bayan* became the new holy book, Iranian New Year's (the spring equinox) would be the first day of the Babi calendar.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the hierarchical tendencies implicit in Babi religious doctrine—the tripartite division into leader (the "Point," i.e. the Bab and his successors in later ages), an elite consisting of the leading disciples known as the "Letters of the Living," and a mass of ordinary followers<sup>38</sup>—there were strong anti-authoritarian and egalitarian impulses in the Babis' actual social practices. The

<sup>33</sup> Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 109.

<sup>34</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 158. Browne also attests to the Babis' courage under torture and in martyrdom, and their enthusiasm for their beliefs: *The Persian Revolution*, xvii.

<sup>35</sup> Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 107.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-5, 107.

communal sharing of wealth during the uprisings has already been noted. Sidney Churchill, the British diplomat in Tehran, wrote in 1889:

... when [the Persian] finds in [a creed] as one of its fundamental principles the liberty of thought and expression thereof, with the ultimate possibility as a result that he may shake off the oppression he suffers at the hands of the local authorities..., he readily affiliates himself with those holding such doctrines with the object of combating existing evils.<sup>39</sup>

Afshari notes such terminology in their literature of 1848 as *mujahid* (fighter) and *shahid* (martyr), the opposition of *zalimin* and *mazulim* (oppressors and oppressed), and references to the late Muhammad Shah as *Sultan-i batil* ("the false king").<sup>40</sup> These attitudes, taken as a whole, found resonance on several levels of Iranian political-religious subcultures: Islamic welfare ideals and struggles for the faith, radical millenarian hopes, artisanal solidarity and opposition politics, and peasant egalitarianism.

Yet the Babi religion and revolts did not attract a majority of the population and ultimately failed.<sup>41</sup> Curzon's estimate of nearly one million followers, at ten percent of the total population, is most likely far too high.<sup>42</sup> Momen concludes that "In most places, only a handful of persons would be converted to the new religion"; as for the uprisings themselves he estimates there were 540 to 600 participants at Shaikh Tabarsi, one thousand in the two revolts at Nairiz, and two to three thousand at Zanjan.<sup>43</sup> Initial successes at each place were followed by the commitment of increasingly strong contingents of government troops, who in each case ultimately prevailed and often followed victory with selective executions or a general massacre of the participants. The movement's aims united two powerful and usually antagonistic forces against it—its extremist religious claims alienated the majority of the ulama, and its political ambitions spurred the Qajar state into action.

<sup>39</sup> Sidney Churchill, letter of December 12, 1889, quoted by E. G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1918), 293, and cited by Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 161 note 3.

<sup>40</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 152-53.

<sup>41</sup> In 1866 the majority of the surviving Babis accepted the new dispensation of Bahau'llah, leading to the moderate, depoliticized universal religion of Bahaism. The minority who continued to embrace Babism became known as Azalis, and a generation later a number of them played progressive roles as individuals in the Constitutional movement. See Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 128-131, and Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 163-64.

<sup>42</sup> Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, I, 449, considered exaggerated by Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 149.

<sup>43</sup> Momen, "The Social Basis of the Babi Uprising," 179, 164, 169, 170.

The army, fortuitously reorganized by the reforming prime minister Amir Kabir in 1848, proved equal to the task of subduing the rebels at Zanjan and Nairiz in 1850.

This brings us to a final question on the significance of these revolts in the history of Iranian social change. Two basic interpretations exist in the literature. One is that Babism was primarily a religious movement, activating one of the traditional Iranian political-religious orientations, that of messianic, millenarian regeneration.<sup>44</sup> Against this Ivanov considers the revolts "popular uprisings ... against the feudal system, and objectively, against the incipient enslavement of the country by foreign capital."<sup>45</sup> This judgment seems too forward-looking in that evidence of its "anti-foreign" content is conspicuously lacking (the Bab, it will be remembered, allowed foreign merchants in the Babi utopia, and the areas of revolt were not those of heaviest foreign economic penetration by mid-century). However, the increasingly negative consequences of growing trade relations with the West in the case of artisans, and the generally exploited condition of the Iranian peasantry, were undoubtedly partially responsible for the presence of numerous members of these two classes in the movement. A more encompassing perspective would entail recognition of the movement's significance on several levels—as a religious challenge to Shi'a orthodoxy, a political threat to the monarchical state, and a radical egalitarian questioning of the socio-economic order. While Bayat identifies these levels, she downplays the last, and declines to categorize the social bases of the movement in the unmistakably populist overtones we have uncovered.<sup>46</sup> Accepting then that the religious content of the movement resonated with traditional millenarian expectations and that its class basis was populist and social doctrines very progressive in content, we can classify the Babi revolts as an important instance of the transitional type of social movement in Qajar Iran, simultaneously sharing traits of social movements going back to the Safavid era and serving as a precursor of the Tobacco Rebellion

<sup>44</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 136; Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 256; Momen, "The Social Basis of the Bābī Upheavals," 176-77, 180. Algar, in a disagreement from within this point of view, sees it as a failure since it went outside what he takes as the orthodox, oppositional attitude of the ulama toward the state: *Religion and State*, 141 note 20.

<sup>45</sup> Ivanov, "Babi Uprisings," 521. Variants of this more materialist interpretation have found favor with Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 149-50, and Minorsky, "Review Essay on *The Babi Uprisings in Iran in 1848-1852*," 879.

<sup>46</sup> Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent*, 107, 125.

and Constitutional Revolution to come. The new factor in the Iranian political economy—its crossing the threshold of dependence on the West—can be increasingly discerned in the causal background of both the Griboyedov attack and the Babi revolts.

## **II. Reform Efforts from 1800 to the 1880s: The Inadequacy of the State's Response**

Partly in response to the growing intensity of internal unrest which climaxed in the Babi revolts, and partly out of a complex encounter with the West, which had followed military victories with increasing political and economic pressure, the Qajar state made two comprehensive efforts to strengthen itself and develop the economy, from 1848 to 1851, and 1870 to 1880. These found an earlier, abandoned precursor in crown prince 'Abbas Mirza's attempt to modernize the army in Azarbaijan earlier in the century. As we shall see these reformers had an increasingly acute awareness of the need for reforms in Iran, but in each case their efforts ultimately came to naught, due partly to the inherent difficulties encountered and largely to the internal resistance of vested interests within the state itself, the dominant class, and the ulama. The resulting lack of change led by the state only made it more vulnerable to change initiated from below in the subsequent period from 1890 to 1910.

### **II.A. Early Reform Efforts, 1805-1835**

The first realization of a need for reform originated in the military threat posed by Russia from 1805 to 1828. Early reformers such as 'Abbas Mirza, Qa'im Maqam and Amir Kabir all came from Azarbaijan, the "front-line" province bordering Russia. 'Abbas Mirza's goal was the development of a disciplined, well-equipped standing army on the European drill model, which he formed as early as 1806 and called the Nizam-i Jadid (the Ottomans' term for their own "New Army"). Modernizing the military would entail administrative and financial reforms as well. The central government was unwilling to pay the troops' salaries however, and the court, particularly 'Abbas Mirza's brothers, who succeeded in mobilizing key ulama in Tabriz, as well as the traditional tribal military leaders, were opposed to such a threat to their positions, leading to the failure of these reforms and the subsequent defeats by Russia.<sup>47</sup> Educational reforms were part of the larger military

<sup>47</sup> Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 53; Algar, *Religion and State*, 76-81.

modernization as well—the first seven Iranian students were sent to Europe in 1815. Others travelled as diplomats or observers to Russia and the Ottoman Empire, contributing to a growing realization that Iran lagged behind its neighbors in the industrial field.<sup>48</sup> ‘Abbas Mirza, “the only person who might have saved Persia,”<sup>49</sup> died in 1833 before he could come to the throne. His minister, Qa‘im Maqam, served briefly as prime minister of Iran until 1835 or 1836, when he was disgraced and murdered.<sup>50</sup> The mystical, half-insane land-grabbing prime minister from 1835 to 1848, Hajji Mirza Aqasi, accomplished no reforms of note, leading Iran instead into a fiscal crisis. The year 1833 then may be seen as an early political turning point, as ‘Abbas Mirza’s untimely death sealed off a path not taken in Iran’s battle against dependency.

## II.B. Amir Kabir, 1848-1851

The next and more far-reaching aim at a comprehensive reform of Iranian institutions was undertaken by Mirza Muhammad Taqi Khan Farahani, known as Amir Kabir (“The Great Amir”), prime minister from 1848 to 1851. His efforts touched on military, administrative, fiscal, judicial, urban, educational, cultural and economic affairs.<sup>51</sup> All of these were aimed at strengthening the Qajar state, to meet both internal social movements and external pressures. In Chapter Four we discussed the early factories he established and the creation of the Dar al-Fonun, Iran’s first state-run college. Fiscal policy included an attempt to audit and then balance the budget by reducing salaries and pensions for the Qajar elite, officials and courtiers. As the army was to be based on universal conscription controlled by the government and not local landowners, some *tiyuls* were reclaimed and their holders given instead a small stipend.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Cf. the remarks of Mirza Mustapha Khan Afshar, secretary of a mission to Russia ca. 1829-30: “It is a pity that we should witness with our own eyes the advancement and order that our neighbor has achieved in a short period and should not do the same.” Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 18, citing Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir va Iran*, 53.

<sup>49</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 165.

<sup>50</sup> Amanat, “Introduction” to *Cities & Trade*, xxi, dates his death in 1835, Algar, *Religion and State*, 106, in 1836.

<sup>51</sup> These are covered in depth by Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir va Iran*, 227ff.

<sup>52</sup> Amanat, “Introduction” to *Cities & Trade*, xxiii; Lorentz, “Iran’s Great Reformer,” 92-94.

These reform measures floundered on both technical and political constraints. Technically the knowledge needed for running factories was naturally absent, and the administrative infrastructure required to raise revenues was lacking. Even more damaging, a powerful elite coalition of those affected by his reforms emerged to oppose him. These included landowners, bureaucratic officials, ulama (angry at losing pensions, the establishment of a secular university and other measures), and disgruntled courtiers organized in a faction around the queen mother. The latter's favorite, Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, convinced the shah that Amir Kabir was plotting against him: "[Amir Kabir's] dismissal was soon followed by his exile, and in January, 1852, his death at the hands of royally appointed assassins."<sup>53</sup>

The significance of Amir Kabir's reforms has been considered limited in conception and scope by Lorentz and Nashat, who see them as attempts to eliminate abuses in the existing system rather than initiating basic changes in Iranian society.<sup>54</sup> This is debatable, for in the context of the actual working of the system, with its rampant inefficiency and corruption both before 1848 and after 1851, he went rather far in seeking to construct a more viable set of military, fiscal and economic institutions. He was a modernizer, nationalist and reformer, whose measures proved radical enough to alienate the bureaucracy and the ulama. His fall in 1851 represents a second turning point in efforts to respond to the European challenge on a basis of equality.

The periods of the premiership of his opponent Nuri (1851-58) and the consultative council that followed the latter's downfall (1858-71) confirm this judgment. Traditional in orientation, they allowed the collapse of virtually all of Amir Kabir's projects: the army deteriorated, factories were abandoned, budget deficits reappeared. Corruption, inefficiency and royal weakness allowed the bureaucratic elite to prosper.<sup>55</sup> Defeat in the second Afghan war at Britain's hands in 1857 gave some slight impetus to changing the form of government in the modest direction of abolishing the premiership in favor of a six-minister council in 1858, followed the next year by an 11-person

<sup>53</sup> Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer," 86, 97-98; Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 16-17.

<sup>54</sup> Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer," 99; Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 21.

<sup>55</sup> Amanat, "Introduction" to *Cities & Trade*, xxiv-xxv; Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 21.

council of ministers and notables in tandem with a larger consultative body of middle-ranking bureaucrats, ulama and other individuals. Lambton notes the limited, advisory capacities of these bodies.<sup>56</sup> The 1860s witnessed another retreat from reform as conservative ministers took charge, while the shah turned to pleasure-seeking, provincial oppression increased and crisis was precipitated by the famine of 1869-70.<sup>57</sup>

## **II.C. Mirza Husain Khan, the Reuter Concession and Its Aftermath, 1870-80**

When Mirza Husain Khan Mushir al-Daula was made Minister of Justice late in 1870, he had spent the past 22 years outside the country, in France (1848-51), India (1851), Tiflis (1852-58) and Istanbul (1858-69), where he had had the opportunity to observe both Western societies and reform efforts by and in Muslim areas. After ten months spent trying to establish independent tribunals and a code of laws to strengthen the central government at the expense of the ulama, provincial governors and *tiyuldars*, in September 1871 he became Minister of War, and in October or November Prime Minister. He then embarked on the most comprehensive set of reforms since Amir Kabir, ranging from immediate famine relief to ambitious economic development plans, governmental reorganization and military modernization. His early bureaucratic measures aimed at coordinating the functions of the various ministries and extending central control over the provinces. Provincial tax administration became less corrupt and more taxes came in to the Central Treasury. Government officials, from the most powerful princes down to lower-level bureaucrats, had their salaries reduced. These policies generated much resentment of Mirza Husain Khan, which simmered until it found a powerful outlet in the opposition to the Reuter Concession.<sup>58</sup>

The Reuter Concession, it will be recalled, was a 70-year agreement to lay railroad tracks, construct telegraph lines, operate river navigation and irrigation works and to exploit minerals and forests, signed on May 25, 1872 with the British citizen Baron de Reuter. It was seen by such

<sup>56</sup> Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 133. See also Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 4, and Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 21-23.

<sup>57</sup> Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 23-24; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 66.

<sup>58</sup> Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 26-38, 43, 49, 74-87, 119.

modernizers as Malkam Khan and Mirza Husain Khan as a rapid shortcut to industrialization and development after the failure of Amir Kabir's program two decades earlier. The shah's initial reservations were overcome by the arguments of Mirza Husain Khan that "What seems obvious to us all is that to construct railways in Iran, we need fifty kurur (25 million tumans [= about 11.3 million pounds sterling]) in cash. It is also obvious that the exalted Government will never be able to afford this amount."<sup>59</sup> There is little doubt that Mirza Husain Khan was sincere in his advocacy of the concession, but the influential enemies he had made took this opportunity to mobilize public and royal opinion against him and it. These included factions at court who either disliked him personally, or had suffered from his reduction of salaries and stipends, or were sympathetic to the Russians who naturally opposed the concession. Certain ulama too joined out of similar motives. A few, such as the leading Tehran mujtahid Hajji Mulla 'Ali Kani, made cogent Islamic and nationalistic arguments that the concession would allow Europeans to overrun the country, turning Iran into a colony like India.<sup>60</sup> The British government decided to remain neutral in the affair, preferring not to jeopardize relations with Russia and its whole position in Iran by any aggressive backing of Reuter, a private capitalist. When Mirza Husain Khan and the shah returned from the first royal trip to Europe in September 1873 the agitation reached a climax. Sir Henry Rawlinson judged that "It is indeed a matter of notoriety that the Shah's crown was in jeopardy for some weeks after his return to Persia, an insurrection in the capital being imminent."<sup>61</sup> Mirza Husain Khan offered his resignation and the shah found it prudent to accept it. The most important consequence of the protest was Nasir al-Din's abrupt change from an interest in liberal reforms to a more traditionally-inclined conservatism. As Amin al-Mulk, his secretary, wrote: "The shah was so dismayed by these affairs that even if he had

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 131. Malkam, who had been brought back to Iran from his post in Cairo when Mirza Husain Khan became prime minister, and titled Nizam al-Mulk ("Regulator of the Realm") would still advocate in his *Usul-i Tamaddun* (Principles of Civilization) ca. 1875 that "the leaders of the state must, without delay, turn over the construction of railways, the operation of mines, the establishment of a bank, and all public works and structures to foreign companies.... The government of Iran must grant as many concessions to foreign companies as possible:" cited in Hamid Algar, *Mirza Malkam Khan. A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 112.

<sup>60</sup> On the opposition to the Reuter Concession, see Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 6-7, and Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 91-94.

<sup>61</sup> Sir Henry Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East* (London, 1875), 128, cited by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 6.

any intentions of making use of what he had seen in Europe, he did not reveal it, he merely concentrated on protecting his throne."<sup>62</sup> No further concessions were offered the Europeans between 1873 and the mid-1880s.

Mirza Husain Khan was called back to office in December 1873 as Foreign Minister, and by 1874 he had once more become *de facto* prime minister. Again he tried to legislate military and administrative reforms, and again he ran into opposition from the entrenched groups thereby threatened. His most important new project was the 1874 *Tanzimat-i Hasaneh* ('The Beneficent Reorganization'), which proposed to tighten the state's control over governors by establishing provincial councils appointed in Tehran and entrusted with the supervision of local taxes, conscription, trade and justice. This code would have drastically eroded the traditional power of Qajar governors, but it was inadequately staffed and financed, and quietly scrapped when both governors and ulama objected to it. Mirza Husain Khan gradually lost such friends and supporters as he had had, became disillusioned with the shah and cynical about further reforms, and was finally dismissed in September 1880. He died a year later, his reforms in disarray.<sup>63</sup>

We thus reach a third turning point in the fortunes of state-initiated reforms in Iran, which may be dated either 1873 with the opposition to the Reuter Concession or 1880 with the final dismissal of Mirza Husain Khan. The 1880s would be dominated by the elder Amin al-Sultan and then his son leading the government, neither of whom were known for their reforming tendencies. Table 5.2 notes the shifting policies of successive prime ministers, and the outcomes in each case: usually death or opposition for the reformers, and fiscal crises for the conservatives. Iran's reformers—'Abbas Mirza, Qa'im Maqam, Amir Kabir and Mirza Husain Khan—faced insuperable obstacles. Even had there been no opposition to their efforts, they lacked the trained personnel and financial resources needed to carry them through. They lacked funds to pay an army, and an army to guarantee the flow of taxes to the state—a vicious circle of state weakness. In addition Amir Kabir and

<sup>62</sup> Amin al-Daula, *Khatirat-i Siyasi-yi Amin al-Daula* [Political Memoirs of Amin al-Daula], edited by H. Farmanfarma'yan (Tehran: Kitabha-yi Iran, 1341/1962-63), 49, cited by Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 140-41. Amin al-Mulk later acquired the title Amin al-Daula and served as prime minister at the end of the 1890s.

<sup>63</sup> Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform*, 52-53, 62-63, 69, 97-112; Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 11, 32 note 14.

**Table 5.2**  
**Reform and Conservatism in**  
**The Iranian State, 1830s-1880s**

Period	Prime Minister	Policy Orientation	Outcome
1830s	Qa'im Maqam	Early centralizer	Dismissed and murdered
1835-48	Hajji Mirza Aqasi	Corrupt aggrandizement	Fiscal crisis
1848-51	Amir Kabir	Wide-ranging reforms	Dismissed and murdered
1851-58	Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri	Traditional venality	Fiscal crisis
1858-71	Consultative Council	Fairly traditional	Continued problems
1871-80	Mirza Husain Khan	New reform efforts	Reuter agitation; dismissed
1880s	Amin al-Sultan(s)	Mostly traditional	Growing fiscal problems

Mirza Husain Khan failed to organize any network of friends and supporters at court, and thus to keep the attention of an indecisive and vacillating Nasir al-Din Shah. These problems left the door open to the effective opposition of their rivals and all those whose interests and prerogatives their reforms challenged, which included most of the dominant class of Iran—high officials, landowners, courtiers and some of the ulama—all of whom benefited from a weak, decentralized state. These struggles within the state culminated in the Reuter Concession agitation of 1873, which presents the paradoxical spectacle of courtiers and ulama seeking personal and corporate goals preventing a foreigner from gaining control of much of Iran's economy, while a modernizing prime minister looked to the West from inside the state to industrialize the country. In this case a mixed elite and popular movement both resisted foreign encroachment and blocked the state from modernizing, setting the stage for later popular movements, especially the Constitutional Revolution that *would* force it to modernize. In 1873 the tangled issues of reform, modernization, centralization, industrialization and national independence were but dimly understood, and the popular movement was tinged with personal interests. In the Tobacco Rebellion 18 years later the line-up of forces would change and Iran's first truly mass nationwide social movement would clarify the underlying issues a great deal further.

### III. The Tobacco Rebellion, 1890-92: A Turning Point

The Tobacco Rebellion was the first national mass movement directed against both the state and foreign domination. Though it might have gone further in protesting *all* concessions, as ultimately articulated it was limited to the cancellation of the unpopular tobacco monopoly granted to an English company, in which it was successful. The social forces involved were truly broad and populist—Keddie's "strange and unstable coalition" included the ulama, merchants, artisans, shopkeepers, intelligentsia and the urban poor. The nature of the leadership, which was largely composed of the ulama with a leavening of other intellectuals, will be seen as the key to the limiting of the movement's demands and indicative of the sometimes conflicting, sometimes congruent goals of Iran's populist class alliance, a phenomenon that would emerge more clearly in the Constitutional Revolution. Before exploring these central analytic issues, an overview of the sequence of the events themselves is in order.

**The course of rebellion.** On March 8, 1890, after large bribes had been given to Iranian officials and apparently without the knowledge of the English government, the shah granted a monopoly concession on Iran's tobacco crop to Major G.F. Talbot.<sup>64</sup> In exchange for 15,000 pounds sterling a year and one-quarter of the net profits paid to the shah, Talbot would be allowed to purchase all the tobacco produced in Iran for export or internal consumption. Cultivators were to register with him, and the guilds of tobacco sellers had to obtain permits from him. The concession was to last for fifty years.<sup>65</sup> More than any previous concession granted to a foreigner, this one directly impinged on a segment of Iran's merchants, shopkeepers and guildspeople (as well as peasant cultivators); it also affected many hundreds of thousands of consumers (in 1890 an estimated 4,000,000 kilograms of tobacco were consumed in Iran, and 5,400,000 kilograms exported, with the 1891 crop valued at 335,900 pounds sterling).<sup>66</sup> While the Iranian government tried to keep the agreement

<sup>64</sup> On the bribes see Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 35; on the lack of any formal British role in the granting of the concession, see *ibid.*, 36-37; Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics*, 226-27; and Ann K. S. Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie: Prelude to Revolution," pp. 119-157 in *Studia Islamica*, volume XXII (1965), and pp. 71-90 in volume XXIII (1965), 121.

<sup>65</sup> "Concession of the Tobacco Régie in Persia" (March 8, 1890), in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, II, 205-6.

<sup>66</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 47; Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 127.

secret, Talbot sold his concession to the newly formed Imperial Tobacco Corporation of Persia (also known as the Régie), which was capitalized with 650,000 pounds sterling and directed by J.J. Ornstein, deputy director of customs in Egypt. Its own prospectus projected 500,000 pounds sterling in net annual profits, pointing out that it would pay only 15,000 pounds rent to Iran, compared with the Turkish Régie's 630,000.<sup>67</sup>

The first complaints against the concession were formally registered by the Russian minister Bützov in September 1890; he told both England and Iran that it overlooked the freedom of commerce clause in the 1828 Treaty of Turkmanchai, an argument which both parties rejected. The secret gradually became more widely known: in November 1890 the Istanbul Persian-language paper *Akhtar* wrote an article criticizing the government for allowing tobacco exports to be included (they were not in the Ottomans' monopoly) and warning that cultivators would be forced to sell to the company. In late January 1891, *Akhtar* wrote: "As the Persian merchants have no right to export tobacco from Persia those who were formerly engaged in this trade are now obliged to give up their business and find some other work for themselves."<sup>68</sup> In February 1891 Talbot arrived to help set up the company and the shah publicly announced the concession. Protests began almost immediately. Sixty tobacco merchants petitioned the shah in March, offering to pay a tax which would generate more revenue than the concession. On March 6 all the Tehran tobacco merchants took bast at 'Abd al-'Azim shrine and wrote a petition promising non-compliance with the Régie. The shah was already having doubts about the concession, but the British advised him not to cancel it, while his council was divided on the matter, with those ministers who had benefitted from the concession wanting to continue it.<sup>69</sup> In March it seemed to the British diplomat Kennedy that the Russian legation and Russian tobacco merchants would acquiesce to the concession, and in May the British consul at Tabriz reported favorably on the attitude of Iranian merchants there.<sup>70</sup> But a serious opposition had already begun which would spread in the course of the year from Shiraz to Tabriz to Isfahan

<sup>67</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 33-35.

<sup>68</sup> *Akhtar* is quoted by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 49; the November 11, 1890 article appears in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 48. *Akhtar* was suspended in Istanbul in February 1891: *ibid.*, 94 note 6.

<sup>69</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 52; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 49.

<sup>70</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 126, 129-30.

to Tehran, with lesser movements in other cities.

Protests began in Shiraz in April 1891, during Ramazan. When the Régie's agents arrived, the bazaar people closed their shops. The cleric Sayyid 'Ali Akbar, who had preached against the company, was ordered deported on May 17. The next day crowds gathered at the telegraph office and a shrine to protest this, and the governor's tribal troops fired on them, killing several people, including a woman and a little girl, and wounding many more. Sayyid 'Ali Akbar went to Bushire where he met Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, the pan-Islamic critic of the shah. Afghani wrote a letter castigating the shah for his concessions to Europeans, which the sayyid took to the leading shi'a mujtahid Hajji Mirza Hasan Shirazi in Samarra (Iraq), who would later play a crucial role in the movement.<sup>71</sup>

In August and September the movement exploded in Azarbaijan, Iran's major tobacco-producing area. The Régie, whose employees numbered 266 by September (with a projected 1,800 in all), tried to begin collecting the harvest there. In August the ulama of Tabriz preached against the concession, and telegrams and petitions were sent to the shah. The shah again wanted to cancel but both Amin al-Sulṭan and the British chargé d'affaires Kennedy argued that he must stand firm as his authority was being attacked. On September 4 a large crowd assembled at Tabriz, armed and ready to proceed against the crown prince, governor-general and the European quarter. Only a telegram from the shah promising cancellation of the concession defused the situation. Though word spread from Tabriz that the concession had in fact been abolished, the prime minister had to contradict this and insist that it was still in effect elsewhere. What had been accomplished was an indefinite suspension of the Régie's operation in Azarbaijan.<sup>72</sup>

In Mashhad, the governor Sahib Divan had forced all merchants to agree to comply with the company late in August. In early October however the merchants balked, seeking the support of the ulama, who in this case refused it.<sup>73</sup> The bazaars closed nevertheless, and a crowd took refuge in the

<sup>71</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 67-73; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 174; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 50 note 2.

<sup>72</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 75-86. Lambton and Keddie, citing the same memorandum of the Régie's director Ornstein in a diplomatic report of September 2, 1891, disagree on the projected number of employees, with Lambton saying 18,000 and Keddie 1,800; the latter figure seems the more likely. See Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 126-27, and Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 65 note.

<sup>73</sup> Keddie cites Russian reports that one of the ulama was pro-British and had been paid by them: *Religion and Rebellion*, 91. Lambton notes that Shaikh Muhammad Taqi helped keep the agitation under control: "The Tobacco

mosque of the shrine complex of Imam Reza. The shah combined the threat of military force with an offer to postpone the concession in Khurasan province for six months, and after five days the protests subsided.<sup>74</sup>

These struggles were paralleled and then surpassed by the movement in Isfahan. In September merchants had petitioned the powerful pro-English governor Zil al-Sultan, while the leading mujtahid Aqa Najafi preached against the concession. The governor replied that he should beat them and cut their heads off for asking "Why?" and "Wherefore?" of the government; they should "let such matters alone." This quieted the situation for a time. On November 21 Aqa Najafi and his brother called a demonstration during which they declared tobacco unclean; their followers marched through the bazaar smashing waterpipes. A boycott of the British-owned Persian Gulf Trading Company was also announced, bringing its business to a standstill. One large merchant burned his tobacco stock. The people of Isfahan ceased smoking.<sup>75</sup>

In late November protests and unrest resumed in Tehran and Tabriz. On about December 2 a nationwide boycott of tobacco started when a fatva attributed to the spiritual leader Shirazi in Samarra was made public. It said:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Forgiving. Today the use of *tanbâku* and tobacco in any form is reckoned as war against the Imâm of the Age (may God hasten his glad Advent!).<sup>76</sup>

The boycott was extremely successful, extending even to the shah's wives and servants, and to Christians and Jews among the non-Muslim population. More desperate than ever, the shah oscillated between heavy-handed actions and negotiations with the movement. The leader of Tehran's merchant community, Kazim Malik al-Tujjar, was arrested and sent to Qazvin. On December 10 Amin al-Sultan met with the ulama and promised to try to revoke the concession if the ulama would permit

Régie," 141-42.

<sup>74</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 91-92. The shah's orders to the governor were uncharacteristically tough: "If they do not go about their business at once and do not cease their absurdities ... you should arrest all the rebels without exception and have 100 of them blown from guns and curse their fathers:" cited in Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 142.

<sup>75</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 90-91, 94-95; Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 144.

<sup>76</sup> Quoted by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 95-96. Doubts surrounding authorship of this fatva have been documented by Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 145 note 4, but as Algar has noted, Shirazi's opposition to the concession was known and he never rejected the attribution of the fatva to him: *Religion and Rebellion*, 211-12.

the resumption of smoking. By December 15 the British government seemed to realize that the monopoly could not be maintained and began to search for face-saving formulas for the shah and Régie. The government sought at first to cancel only the internal monopoly (this was offered on December 18), but on December 25 placards appeared in the bazaar threatening declaration of a holy war two days later. The prime minister then pledged to completely cancel the concession if the jihad was annulled and smoking resumed. When the company did not confirm this (as no agreement had been reached between it and the shah), new disorders arose at Qazvin, Yazd and Kirmanshah.<sup>77</sup>

Events reached their climax in Tehran early in January 1892. On January 3 the government ordered Tehran's leading mujtahid, Mirza Hasan Ashtiani to either end the boycott by smoking in public, or to leave the city. When he prepared to leave the next day, crowds gathered at his house after closing the bazaar, to prevent the army from forcing him to depart. Some 4,000 men and women, led by sayyids, marched towards the royal palaces. After first ignoring orders to do so, troops fired on the crowd, killing seven or more people. The crowd calmed down only when the shah sent a message saying Ashtiani could stay and reaffirming that the concession was cancelled. Ashtiani urged the people to disperse, promising they would reconvene if the matter wasn't settled within two days. On January 5 the Régie agreed to the cancellation of its concession, realizing that not to do so would lead to an untenable situation in which further bloodshed and perhaps revolution would be inevitable. The atmosphere remained tense until January 26, when the town crier announced the end of the ban on tobacco.<sup>78</sup> The Tobacco Rebellion had ended.

**Social forces and leadership.** Let us begin by posing the basic question, whom was this social struggle really between? Hamid Algar considers the Tobacco Rebellion "essentially a confrontation between the people and the state."<sup>79</sup> Ann Lambton at one point implies that above all the English were struggling to get the shah to reform his government.<sup>80</sup> The shah himself recognized "That all his difficulties arise from having shown himself a friend of England."<sup>81</sup> Indeed, this is the

<sup>77</sup> Keddîe, *Religion and Rebellion*, 95-103; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 52, on the success of the boycott.

<sup>78</sup> Keddîe, *Religion and Rebellion*, 104-107; Algar, *Religion and State*, 214-15.

<sup>79</sup> Algar, *Religion and State*, 205. Elsewhere he takes a position closer to the one I shall argue when he notes the social movements of the Qajar period were against "foreign domination and domestic tyranny": "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama," 236.

most accurate assessment. It could be argued that the *main* conflict in the Tobacco Rebellion was between a large segment of the Iranian people and the English, with the shah inevitably becoming a target until he dissociated himself from the English. The movement, then, involved resistance both to foreigners and the shah; below we shall examine how it included issues auxiliary to and larger than the single concession to which it finally limited its aims.

The social forces that made the rebellion comprised the first very broad, fully mass movement in Iranian social history. Keddie writes of "The strange and unstable coalition of ulama, nationalists, discontented merchants and city populations, and powerful domestic and foreign interests who were opposed to the government."<sup>82</sup> The leadership of the movement will be discussed presently. For now, these "city populations" should be disaggregated a bit further: the urban crowds that engaged in the decisive confrontations included, in addition to merchants and ulama, artisans, small shopkeepers, and some of the urban poor, both women and men. The tobacco merchants who were most obviously affected by the concession comprised several groups: small-scale retail tobacco dealers, large wholesale merchants and exporters, those with investments in cultivation and those engaged in processing tobacco.<sup>83</sup> In May 1891 the British consul at Tabriz reported that the bazaar was constantly discussing the negative terms of the agreement; in August a petition demanded its abolition "on the pretext that [the Régie] will buy the tobacco very cheap and sell it again very dear; all the present tobacco merchants will be ruined."<sup>84</sup> According to its prospectus, the Régie intended to satisfy both consumers and cultivators, apparently at the expense of the merchant middle-men.<sup>85</sup>

Urban consumers were not convinced of this claim, as they supported the boycott in overwhelming

<sup>80</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 153-54. This derives from her general judgment that English commercial penetration in Iran was benign and progressive, while Russia's was not. In fact the English government wanted "stability" in Iran only to protect its own commercial interests there and its geopolitical stake in the region generally, as I have argued in Chapter Four.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 154, citing a report from the British minister Lascelles on January 5, 1892.

<sup>82</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 131.

<sup>83</sup> Gilbar, "The Big Merchants (*tujjār*)," 290-92. Deteriorating economic conditions in key areas may have made other merchants join the protests as well. Tabriz had witnessed a certain decline in importance since mid-century, while Shiraz suffered a temporary slump in 1889-91 due to bad harvests and the depreciation of Iran's silver currency: see Chapter Four and McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 42, who notes that in relatively prosperous Khurasan, the ulama refused to back the merchants against the concession.

<sup>84</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 170, 169.

<sup>85</sup> See the remarks of Antoine Kitabji in the prospectus, dated August 2, 1890, cited by Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 34-35.

numbers. Nor were the cultivators won over as allies to the company; according to Keddie, "In the tobacco growing areas the peasants were also made to believe that they would suffer great losses."<sup>86</sup> The widespread participation of the urban lower classes is suggested by the British consul Paton in Tabriz: "the agitation ... has evidently been taken up strongly by the whole population, high and low."<sup>87</sup> Finally, the mass movement involved women as well as men. The crowds that faced royal troops in Shiraz and Tehran included a number of women: a woman and a girl were killed at Shiraz, while women were active in the determining events of January 1892 in Tehran.<sup>88</sup>

The political culture of the Tobacco Rebellion affirms its populist social bases. The mosques were generally the place where artisans and merchants would congregate whenever they closed their shops in protest. There they would listen to stories of the life and deaths of 'Ali and Husain in an emotionally charged atmosphere. Bodies of dead demonstrators would be carried to the mosques, further agitating the crowds.<sup>89</sup> Public attitudes toward the shah evinced a humorous, deeply-rooted anti-authoritarian strain. On the day an envoy was scheduled to enter Tabriz with a message from Nasir al-Din Shah, a crowd of people paraded a dog through the streets with a letter attached to its neck bearing the shah's autograph.<sup>90</sup> Satire of the court and ruling class was expressed through various popular acts; Afshari notes that "a very imaginative and deriding poetry circulated in Tehran, and women and children took an active part in spreading it around."<sup>91</sup> Such actions are telling indicators of the growth in political consciousness of the urban population as a result of their struggle against the concession.

The Tobacco Rebellion was led by the ulama, now in an emergent alliance with members of the radical, secular nationalist intelligentsia. Some individuals from the bureaucratic elite also played a role, but this was out of rivalry with other ministers or due to pro-Russian sentiments.<sup>92</sup> It was the

<sup>86</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 65.

<sup>87</sup> Paton to Kennedy, August 15, 1891, cited by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 76. See also Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 170.

<sup>88</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 182-83, and Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 104.

<sup>89</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 181-82.

<sup>90</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 80, quoting Kennedy's report of September 1, 1891.

<sup>91</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 185.

ulama who provided the principal leadership of the movement, often at the request of aggrieved merchants and guildspeople. Though there were some exceptions and limits to their unity and demands (to be treated below), and though their motives may have been mixed,<sup>93</sup> their role was generally one of decisive intervention on the side of the rebellion. The British minister Lascelles reported on December 22, 1891:

I have been informed by persons long resident in Persia that they have been astonished at this assertion of power on the part of the Mollahs, both as regards their opposition to the Government and the implicit obedience which the people have yielded to their commands...<sup>94</sup>

A network of ulama extended downward from the most eminent mujtahid, Mirza Hasan Shirazi in Iraq, who had become the sole marja'-i taqlid (source of imitation) in the 1870s, to the clerical leaders in each of the cities—Hajj Sayyid 'Ali Akbar Falasiri in Shiraz, Mirza Aqa Javad in Tabriz, Aqa Najafi in Isfahan, Hajj Habib Mujtahid Shahidi in Mashhad, and Mirza Hasan Ashtiani in Tehran.<sup>95</sup> Use of the telegraph facilitated communications among them, and word then spread in each city through them to the neighborhood mullas and general population.

The religious analysis behind the movement had several bases. Keddie suggests "there was bound to be opposition to the handling of an item of intimate use by unbelievers. According to stricter Shi'is, close contact with an article handled by unbelievers was defiling."<sup>96</sup> A more solid legal argument against the concession saw it as an unlawful monopoly which restricted the freedom of Muslim merchants.<sup>97</sup> Shirazi telegraphed the shah in September 1891 that concessions constituted foreign interference in Muslim affairs, which had bad consequences. Of European penetration he said:

<sup>92</sup> These included the shah's son Kamran Mirza who was commander-in-chief of the army, ex-foreign minister Mushir al-Daula, and Amir Nizam, the pro-Russian governor of Tabriz. The Russians were involved in organizing the opposition, though Keddie concludes that "the exact extent and nature of Russian activity is difficult to determine:" *Religion and Rebellion*, 66.

<sup>93</sup> Lambton feels that some were "obscurantist and took part in the movement because they were opposed to any attempt to open up the country lest this should lead to a decline in their own influence over the people," while at the same time noting some of their cogent objections to be discussed below: "The Tobacco Régie," 88-89.

<sup>94</sup> Lascelles's report is quoted by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 99.

<sup>95</sup> Algar, *Religion and State*, 207, 209, 213.

<sup>96</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 50.

<sup>97</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 177. See also the letter of protest sent to the chief of the court of justice at Tabriz quoted by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 58.

The entry of foreigners into the interior affairs of the country, their relations and trade with Muslims, the concessions such as the Bank, Tobacco Régie, Railroads, and others are, for many reasons, against the exact sense of the Koran and God's orders. These acts weaken the power of the Government and are the cause of the ruin of order in the country, and they oppress the subjects.<sup>98</sup>

There was a general concern that Islam was endangered, as the Shiraz mujtahid Mirza Muhammad 'Ali told the British diplomat there: "Doubtless the corporation would flood the country with Europeans who would have constant intercourse with the people to undermine their religion."<sup>99</sup> This analysis reached its logical conclusion in calls for jihad. As early as April 1891 Sayyid 'Ali Akbar preached with sword in hand that jihad had become a duty for Muslims.<sup>100</sup> Later in the year people prepared for jihad in Tehran and Tabriz. Though armed confrontations ultimately did not take place, the disciplined observance of Shirazi's fatwa prohibiting the use of tobacco signalled the symbolic, inner aspect of jihad in the movement: a striving against evil with all one's being. Much of the population was doubtless inspired by the general position of the ulama that Islam itself was being attacked by foreigners, and that the shah was doing nothing to defend the faith.

A key mediator between the religious opposition of the ulama and the incipient nationalism of the intelligentsia was Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. At various intervals between 1886 and 1890 he had spoken both to the shah and to "all classes" of people in Iran of the urgent need for legal and human rights, safeguards of life and property, freedoms of thought and the press.<sup>101</sup> In January 1891 he was expelled from the country after an anonymous letter reached the shah upbraiding him for selling the resources of Iran to foreigners and failing to protect religion. Before leaving he formed a secret society "aimed at reform and lessening foreign influence in Iran."<sup>102</sup> Though Algar places him only on "the fringe of events" in the Tobacco Rebellion, Keddie suggests that he helped influence Shirazi's entry into the political arena by writing him a letter in May that stated Iranians were opposed to the concession and needed a leader.<sup>103</sup> The letter castigates the shah in religious

<sup>98</sup> This telegram is quoted by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 89.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 131, citing a consular report of June 2, 1891.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 110 note 2a.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-26. According to the confession of Mirza Muhammad Reza, the shah's assassin in 1896 and one of Afghani's followers, Jamal al-Din is said to have appealed to "many in all classes, amongst the 'ulama', the ministers, the nobles, the merchants, the artisans, and tradesfolk.... people of every class and condition ... came to visit and see him, and hearkened to his discourses:" quoted in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 44.

<sup>102</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 49, 46-47. By autumn 1891 he told E. G. Browne that there was no hope of reform until the shah's and Amin al-Sultan's heads had been cut off: *The Persian Revolution*, 45.

terms for his concessions to Russia and Britain:

In short this criminal has offered the provinces of the Persian land to auction amongst the Powers, and is selling the realms of Islām and the abodes of Muḥammad and his household (on whom be greeting and salutation) to foreigners.<sup>103</sup>

Shirazi's telegram to the shah in September made arguments along similar lines. Since Shirazi's leadership was decisive in the boycott of tobacco, Afghani as well can be seen to have played a pivotal role in the rebellion.

The secondary leadership of the movement came from a new group, the intelligentsia, some of whom were followers of Afghani. They included journalists, writers, diplomats and bureaucrats, members of the middle class who had received a secular education or travelled abroad. One group was composed of Azeri-speaking Russian subjects living in the Caucasus.<sup>105</sup> Two newspapers, the Istanbul-based *Akhtar* whose articles of November 1890 and February 1891 have already been mentioned, and Malkam Khan's *Qanun* from England, helped expose the concession and generate opposition to it. *Qanun*'s first issues, appearing in 1890, voiced a range of criticisms of state and society in Iran. On July 18 it addressed the prime minister, "By what law do you sell these rights and privileges of our State to foreign adventurers?.... How do you dare to sell to unbelievers the means of livelihood of the Muslims?"<sup>106</sup> The Qajar prince 'Abbas Mirza Mulkara complained in his autobiography, "... the English [company] came to Iran as to a conquered country."<sup>107</sup> Another relevant document is "A Petition from Iranian Reformers to the Foreign Representatives in Tehran," quoted as the second epigraph to this chapter. These reformers often spoke and wrote in Islamic idiom, though sometimes more for effect than out of deep conviction.<sup>108</sup> "A Petition from Iranian Reformers" calls for "the establishment of the organic laws of the land" which should be based on "the just and human application of our Shariat [Islamic law]."<sup>109</sup> *Qanun* wrote "We do not desire to

<sup>103</sup> See Algar, *Religion and State*, 205, and Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 70, 73.

<sup>104</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 19. The letter is translated and quoted in full in *ibid.*, 15-21.

<sup>105</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 142.

<sup>106</sup> *Qanun*, issue number 6 (July 18, 1890), quoted in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 41. See also *ibid.*, 36ff.

<sup>107</sup> 'Abbas Mirza Mulkara, *Sharh-i Hal*, edited by 'Abd al-Ḥusain Nava'i (Tehran: 1325/1946-47), 114, cited by Algar, *Religion and State*, 208.

<sup>108</sup> This is certainly true of Malkam Khan and Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmāni, the latter of whom was a Babi: see Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 28-29, 36, 143-44.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 152-53.

invent new laws. Our desire is that our learned people and the chiefs of our religion may meet together and have the laws of our God carried out in a proper way."<sup>110</sup> Behind these fervent words (with their implicit wish for an alliance between intellectuals and the ulama) loomed the wider range of reforms sought by the intelligentsia: an end to foreign economic and political hegemony in Iran, legal limits on the autocratic powers of the shah, and development of educational, judicial and other institutions along somewhat ambiguous "modern" lines. The nature of the intelligentsia's alliance with the ulama and the less than total congruence of their demands played a role in limiting the outcome of the movement, a subject to which we may now turn.

**The outcome and aftermath of the Tobacco Rebellion.** How far might the Tobacco Rebellion have gone? Some contemporaries thought they were in the presence of a potential revolution; this was the opinion of the director of the Régie, Ornstein, and the French diplomat de Balloy who felt the events of January 4, 1892 were "not an uprising but a revolution."<sup>111</sup> The shah's French physician Feuvrier judged it "a serious affair which has deeply stirred the country, driving it to the verge of rebellion."<sup>112</sup>

There were substantial wider grievances in the air at the time of which note should be taken. The issue of European control over trade was raised by the boycott of the British-owned Persian Gulf Trading Company at Shiraz. Afghani, Shirazi and Malkam Khan each made mention of the other European concessions in Iran, which included the British and Russian banks, the Belgian-operated tramway, steamships on the Karun river, and others. In the crucial events of early January, Ashtiani, who was leading the movement in Tehran, demanded the abolition of all foreign concessions as his condition for the maintenance of order, while Shirazi did not want to allow the resumption of smoking until "The hands of foreigners were completely severed from the countries of Islam."<sup>113</sup> Internal abuses were also singled out in this period, including debasement of currency at the mint and

<sup>110</sup> *Qanun*, quoted in *ibid.*, 54.

<sup>111</sup> De Balloy and Ornstein are quoted by Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 106-7.

<sup>112</sup> Cited by Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 57.

<sup>113</sup> Shirazi's words are found in Lascelles's report of February 11, 1892, cited by Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 156, and Ashtiani's demands are noted in *ibid.*, 151-53.

high food prices. To these were added calls for the resignation of the prime minister and death threats in early January against him, Ornstein and Rabino, the manager of the British bank.<sup>114</sup>

What accounts for the more limited outcome of the Tobacco Rebellion then, given these larger demands and the opinions of observers regarding its revolutionary potential? One element was the emergence of splits and wavering among certain members of the ulama at the last moment. There had not, of course, been total unanimity to begin with: in December 1891 Sayyid 'Abdullah Bihbihani, opposed to the activism of Shirazi and possibly bribed by the Régie, had gone so far as to actually smoke in the mosque while preaching.<sup>115</sup> The Imam Jom'a of Tehran, a relative of the shah, as well as the key ulama in Mashhad, had refused to back the protest. But beyond these scattered non-participants, Ashtiani himself moderated his demands on January 5, 1892, when the government and Régie agreed to cancel the concession. This may have been a prudent political compromise on his part, or it may have been due to money or threats (or both) coming from the government.<sup>116</sup> Whatever the exact reason, Ashtiani wrote to Shirazi in this vein:

With reference to other events which have happened in this government, such as the question of the Bank and the Railway, it is as well that you should cut it short concerning the abolition of these in your correspondence. In the first place the injuries caused by these compared to that caused by the Régie Concession is as a drop of water to the ocean.

Secondly the Government is not able to contend with all the Powers at once....

You should know this much, that His Majesty is not at all disposed for the interference of Europeans in this country, but on account of political advantages they (the Europeans) do interfere a little.<sup>117</sup>

Shortly afterwards greater pensions were paid to certain members of the ulama, while others were newly added to the government's list.<sup>118</sup> A second element in the end of the movement was that the Russians ceased their encouragement of it as soon as the tobacco concession was cancelled, naturally not wanting to see any larger steps taken against foreign power in Iran generally.<sup>119</sup> Finally, it

<sup>114</sup> Keddîe, *Religion and Rebellion*, 107, 39, 73-74.

<sup>115</sup> Algar, *Religion and State*, 213, and *idem*, lecture on the Tobacco Rebellion at the University of California, Berkeley, February 8, 1982.

<sup>116</sup> Keddîe, *Religion and Rebellion*, 105-6, 116.

<sup>117</sup> Ashtiani to Shirazi, quoted in Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 156-57.

<sup>118</sup> Keddîe, *Religion and Rebellion*, 117-18; Algar, *Religion and State*, 219.

<sup>119</sup> Keddîe, *Religion and Rebellion*, 119.

should be noted that the intelligentsia, bound to a strategy of "using" the ulama and Islamically-couched appeals to further their aims while remaining in the background of events, had less influence in pushing a broader agenda for change (on which they themselves were far from in agreement) when leading ulama brought the movement to a close.

The outcome then was a victory within firm limits. By focussing on a single concession which affected much of the population, the movement became widespread and determined. But by not pushing beyond this for an end to all foreign concessions in Iran and dismissal of the ministers responsible for them, the victory was largely symbolic, as Keddie has pointed out.<sup>120</sup> Likewise Afshari considers it a "limited-objective" type of revolt, and Lambton "not a revolutionary movement."<sup>121</sup> These observations are retrospectively true, but the Tobacco Rebellion was also a victory for the populist coalition that made it, demonstrating a newly-found capacity to resist both the shah and a foreign power. Political consciousness clarified itself and advanced considerably in the course of the struggle, and issues were articulated which would resurface in the Constitutional Revolution.

The consequences and aftermath of the rebellion provide evidence of the limited potential for change within the restricted parameters of dependency. The issue of compensation for the Régie is an instructive one. While the movement was still raging the company at one point demanded a sum equal to fifty years' worth of profits as a condition for withdrawal, at another 100,000 pounds sterling a year for the internal monopoly alone to be cancelled.<sup>122</sup> Total compensation was finally fixed in April 1892 at 500,000 pounds; since the company was to give its assets in Iran, allegedly worth 139,000 pounds, to the government, it would appear that Iran's net loss was 346,000 pounds sterling, for which it got nothing of value, a grossly unfair settlement in view of Talbot's original investment of a mere 15,000 pounds. The shah had to borrow the 500,000 pounds from the British bank, with payments set at 12,500 pounds a year on the capital, plus six percent interest (thus circa 30,000 pounds a year at first), for forty years. This represented Iran's first major foreign debt, a significant

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 114, 131.

<sup>121</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 166; Ann K. S. Lambton, "The Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-6," pp. 173-182 in P. J. Vatikiotis, editor, *Revolution in the Middle East and Other Case Studies* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 175.

<sup>122</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 98.

milestone in its dependence on the West. The Iranian government then entered into negotiations with the French Société du Tombac, registered in Istanbul, with which the Régie had an agreement from February 1891 to handle all tobacco exported from Iran. After trying unsuccessfully to convince the Ottoman sultan to abandon his contract with the French company, which was represented by Ornstein (!), Iran agreed in September 1892 that the Société would have a monopoly on its exports of tobacco to the Ottoman Empire. The income from this arrangement was calculated to cover a portion of the costs of the British loan. One condition was that only Iranian Muslims would be employed as agents in Iran, and that the company would not put its seals on Iran's tobacco until this left the country. Lambton notes "Great secrecy was observed for fear of opposition from the *mullās*."<sup>123</sup> McDaniel suggests that "The clergy were mollified [no pun intended?] afterward by the government, given pensions and bribes."<sup>124</sup> Merchants seem to have contented themselves with control over the internal markets. Nor did the Russians this time object. This strange afterlife of the concession underlines the *symbolic* content of the movement, as Iran's tobacco remained the export monopoly of a French company discretely located in Istanbul.

A second consequence highlighting change within continuity was the reversal of the British and Russian positions in Iran. There was a marked shift from British influence in the 1880s to Russian in the 1890s at the Qajar court, as the prime minister Amin al-Sultan adopted pro-Russian policies in place of his earlier pro-British ones.<sup>125</sup> Feuvrier, who was close to the court, recorded that the British minister Lascelles "is reported to have said that, in face of this new attitude of the Persians, of this resistance of which he had not judged them capable, he considered that it was no longer possible to sustain with advantage the work of his predecessor."<sup>126</sup> While it is certainly true that the British had lost much of their political position in Iran, the result was not a gain in the state's freedom to maneuver, but rather a closer dependence politically and economically on an even more reactionary Western power, Russia. This would have important repercussions on the balance of social forces in

<sup>123</sup> Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 84, 72ff.

<sup>124</sup> McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 48, 47. McDaniel produces a dispatch of October 2, 1892 from the American vice-consul Fox disclosing that "This time the priesthood have been consulted:" *ibid.*, 212.

<sup>125</sup> Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion*, 1, 120-23.

<sup>126</sup> Feuvrier is quoted by Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 52-53.

the Constitutional Revolution fifteen years later, as the Russians would now be the targets rather than the supporters of a popular social movement in Iran.

Internally the shah's "popularity" plunged and the state's fiscal problems were exacerbated. Crown lands were sold to balance the budget in the 1890s, the army remained a source of weakness, and Nasir al-Din Shah became even more conservative and repressive. Popular unrest continued into the 1890s, with protests against unpopular governors in Astarabad, Shiraz and Hamadan (1892), Isfahan (1893) and Tabriz (1895).<sup>127</sup> Peasants suffered as taxes went up generally to pay for the loan and address the budget deficits.<sup>128</sup> Finally, on May 1, 1896 Nasir al-Din Shah, after 48 years of rule, was assassinated by Mirza Muhammad Reza of Kirman, a follower of Afghani.<sup>129</sup> Thus was Afghani's 1891 call for the cutting off of the shah's head carried out. This, too, represented change within continuity, as the new shah Muzaffar al-Din inherited a host of problems with no effective policy instruments to meet them, while a huge popular movement loomed on the horizon.

#### IV. The Constitutional Revolution, 1905-1911: An Opportunity Missed

The centerpiece of social change in the Qajar period is the massive upheaval fought between 1905 and 1911 known as the Constitutional Revolution or movement. A range of interpretations and debates exist regarding its causes, the social forces which contended, and the reasons for its unsuccessful outcome. The present analysis will focus on assessing the degree and nature of participation by various groups and classes on both sides as the key to understanding the causes and outcome of the revolution. We shall see that the differential Western impact on social groups and classes, the internal complexity of the Iranian social structure and state, and the external pressures brought to bear by Britain and especially Russia, all played a role. Preliminary to the undertaking of this analysis, a review of the course of events in the revolution is required. We shall then turn to a

<sup>127</sup> See Bakhash, *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy and Reform*, 287-88.

<sup>128</sup> Tobacco prices in particular were depressed due to the surplus left from the 1892 crop, and, it seems, the reversion to low prices offered by merchants in the Régie's wake. See McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 48; Tamara, *Ekonomicheskoe...*, in Issawi, *EHII*, 250; and Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie," 88.

<sup>129</sup> Browne's account of this includes the detailed confession/cross-examination of Mirza Muhanmad Reza, which was printed in the newspaper *Sur-i Israfil* from July 7 to August 16, 1907: *The Persian Revolution*, 59-94.

discussion of the social forces, organization, ideologies and political cultures that underlay Iran's first great revolution of the twentieth century.

#### IV.A. The Course of Events

After a brief liberal phase, the reign of Muzaffar al-Din Shah from 1898 on witnessed a replay of the recurrent problems of late Qajar society: a state burdened by the shah's need for European loans to finance extravagant trips abroad, combined with continued urban unrest generated by high bread prices and the arbitrary rule of grasping and inflexible provincial governors, and in the capital the new government of 'Ain al-Daula which took over from Amin al-Sultan in 1903-4. Though inflation fluctuated, the major northern cities experienced high rates in the 1890s; a sudden deflation in the years 1900-1905 only led to worse unemployment and an economic downturn.<sup>130</sup> Merchants were upset by the customs revision of 1903 that favored Russian goods and the use of Belgian administrators in the customs since 1899. Joseph Naus, the Belgian minister of Iran's customs, posts and telegraphs was particularly disliked.<sup>131</sup> In August 1903 the chief mujtahids of Karbala and Najaf reproached the shah "for handing over his country to foreigners, reminding him that his succession was only being tolerated."<sup>132</sup> By 1905, the pensions of certain ulama were three years in arrears, and the government proposed tightening its control over *vaqfs*.<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile inspiration was drawn from the Japanese victory over Russia in their 1904-5 war: it seemed to some intellectuals significant that the only Asian constitutional state had defeated the major Western non-constitutional one, and much of the Iranian population undoubtedly enjoyed the reverses of their overbearing northern neighbor, which continued with the 1905 Russian revolution.<sup>134</sup> Secret societies of secular

<sup>130</sup> Gilbar, "Trends in the Development of Prices," 197; *idem*, "Demographic Trends," 156. A rather prescient letter appeared in the *London Times* on August 21, 1903, suggesting that "events were imminent in Persia which might have serious consequences for that country, these being chiefly due to unbearable economic conditions:" quoted in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 107-8.

<sup>131</sup> Naus eventually became high treasurer, head of the passport department and a member of the supreme council of state. Already disliked for his arrogance and insensitivity, the appearance of a photo of him in 1905 dressed in the garb of a mulla at a fancy dress ball outraged the ulama: Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 112, 235; Algar, *Religion and State*, 242. The picture itself appears in W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia* (New York: The Century Company, 1912), opposite page 27.

<sup>132</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 108.

<sup>133</sup> Gilbar, "The Big Merchants (*tujjār*)," 302.

intellectual and clerical leaders formed in the capital and elsewhere to discuss these developments.

The existence of these grievances and the abuses that caused them meant that a large portion of the urban population was prepared for confrontation with the government by 1905. A series of initially minor incidents touched off three increasingly serious protests in Tehran beginning in April 1905 and culminating in the grant of a national assembly and constitution in August 1906. On April 26, 1905 two hundred moneylenders and merchants of Tehran closed their shops and took *bast* in the shrine of 'Abd al-'Azim, demanding a range of reforms, and in particular, repayment of their loans to the state and dismissal of the unpopular Naus. The shah defused the situation with a promise to repay his debts and to dismiss Naus when he returned from his trip to Europe, but no action was taken for the rest of the year.<sup>135</sup> On December 11, 1905 two prominent sugar merchants were beaten for high prices by the governor of Tehran, 'Ala al-Daula.<sup>136</sup> Some two thousand ulama, students, tradespeople and merchants took *bast* at 'Abd al-'Azim on December 13, and before this ended a month later, their demands had escalated to dismissal of the prime minister and the establishment of an '*adalatkhana* (House of Justice).<sup>137</sup> The shah gave in, promising the removal of 'Ain al-Daula and to convene an '*adalatkhana*, "which was to consist of representatives elected by the clergy, merchants and landed proprietors, and presided over by the Shāh himself; to abolish favoritism; and to make all Persian subjects equal in the eyes of the Law."<sup>138</sup> The governor of Tehran, 'Ala al-Daula, was dismissed the next day, but this was the only demand that was met.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Nikki Keddie, "Popular Participation in the Persian Revolution of 1905-1911," pp. 66-79 in Keddie, *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1980), 71.

<sup>135</sup> Gilbar, "The Big Merchants (*tujjār*)," 296-97, 301; Lambton, "Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution," 56-57; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 81; Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh-i Iran* [History of the Constitutional Revolution of Iran] (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1344/1965), 52.

<sup>136</sup> Prices rose in 1905 due to a bad harvest throughout the country, and disruption of trade with Russia (who provided most of Iran's sugar) owing to a cholera epidemic, the Russo-Japanese war and the 1905 revolution in Russia: Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 81. McDaniel suggests that despite these factors the price increases by the Tehran merchants were a bid for a windfall profit: *The Shuster Mission*, 56 note 17.

<sup>137</sup> The provenance of the demand for an '*adalatkhana* is unclear. Algar notes that it was added to the ulama's list of demands by a liberal courtier from one of the secret societies: *Religion and State*, 247. See also Said Amir Arjomand, "Review Essay: Religion and Ideology in the Constitutional Revolution," pp. 282-291 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XII, numbers 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1979), 284.

<sup>138</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 114.

<sup>139</sup> Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 60-76; E. G. Browne, "Chronology of the Persian Revolution," pp. 310-336 in his *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (Los Angeles: Kalamât Press, 1983 [London: Cambridge University Press, 1914]), 312.

The third and gravest set of protests came in the summer of 1906. On July 11 the prime minister tried to expel a popular preacher; a crowd formed and troops fired, killing a sayyid. Further confrontations the next day led to 15 or more deaths.<sup>140</sup> This massacre sharpened the demand for a House of Justice. In the next week two enormous basts were started: some one thousand of the ulama, led by Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai and Sayyid 'Abdullah Bihbihani, left Tehran for Qum, ninety miles away, taking their religious and legal services on strike with them. Meanwhile, with the permission of the British chargé d'affaires Grant Duff, merchants, artisans, ulama and students occupied the gardens and grounds of the British Legation in Tehran. By August 1 this group numbered 14,000 people. They demanded the removal of 'Ain al-Daula, the promulgation of a code of laws, and the recall of the ulama from Qum. With the army starting to show sympathy for the bastis, the shah dismissed his prime minister on July 30 and agreed to invite the ulama back, but the protestors now demanded a constitution and a representative national assembly (*majlis*). On August 5 the shah issued the farman granting an "Assembly ... [which] shall carry out the requisite deliberations and investigations on all necessary subjects connected with important affairs of the State and Empire and the public interests."<sup>141</sup>

A provisional body was set up to draft the electoral code and organize the establishment of a majlis. Over 2,000 people took part. The shah wavered again, but a new bast on September 8, plus fresh protests in the provinces, especially at Tabriz, forced the shah to confirm and sign the order for elections. The electoral code provided for a majlis chosen by six categories of electors: "(i) Princes and the Qájár tribe: (ii) Doctors of Divinity and Students: (iii) Nobles and Notables: (iv) Merchants: (v) Landed proprietors and peasants: (vi) Tradeguilds."<sup>142</sup> "Landed proprietors and peasants" had to possess property worth 1,000 tomans (200 pounds sterling), effectively disenfranchising the peasantry. Merchants and artisans were required to have established businesses,

<sup>140</sup> On the various estimates of the casualties, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 83; Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 96-101; and Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 117. Browne dates these events June 21, 1906 ("Chronology," 312), but Kasravi places them in July, much closer to the basts which followed, which makes more sense.

<sup>141</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 353. This paragraph is based on *ibid.*, 118-22, and Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 97-119.

<sup>142</sup> The Electoral Law of September 9, 1906 is found in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 355-359.

which ruled out workers and the urban poor. Women could not vote.<sup>143</sup> Elections were held in Tehran in early October, although governors resisted allowing them at Tabriz, Rasht and Mashhad. People took refuge at the British legations in Rasht, Shiraz and Isfahan, and at the telegraph office in Zanjan. The majlis opened on October 7 with the Tehran delegates present. The Fundamental Law (the first part of the constitution) was ready by late October, but Muzaffar al-Sin Shah signed it only on his deathbed, on December 30, 1906. He died January 8, 1907.<sup>144</sup>

From January 1907 to June 1908 a sharp conflict developed between the new, more autocratic Muhammad 'Ali Shah and the increasingly self-confident and politically aware majlis. The majlis was not invited to the coronation, a first snub. In February it forced the dismissal of Naus from his posts and detained him until he gave an account of his actions in office. The shah scored a victory in April by bringing back the conservative Amin al-Sultan as prime minister. In June the shah's brother, Salar al-Daula, revolted, but this elite challenge was defeated. In July a serious split developed among the ulama when Shaikh Fazlullah Nuri began an agitation against the constitutionalist leaders as "atheists, freethinkers, Bábís and the like"; other leading ulama opposed him. Matters came to a dramatic head on August 31, when the Anglo-Russian agreement dividing Iran into "spheres of influence" (at the same time formally promising to guarantee its sovereignty) was signed at St. Petersburg. The same day a young radical member of a secret society assassinated the prime minister Amin al-Sultan. Iranian public opinion was generally outraged at the agreement between Russia and England. The shah meanwhile had to take note of public opposition to his reactionary policies; this climate permitted the majlis to force his signing of the Supplementary Fundamental Laws (the second part of the constitution) on October 7, which gave it wide legislative powers at the expense of the monarchy. Later that month it passed its first budget, with greatly reduced pensions for the court and its favorites, and abolition of the abuses of tax-farming and *tiyuls* in land tenure.

<sup>143</sup> Ordinary tribespeople were effectively nonvoters as well. Majd al-Islam Kirmani estimates that 120,000 Iranians were eligible to vote (though he gives the population as 20 million, rather than 10 million): *Tarikh-i Inhitat-i Majlis* [History of the Fall of the Majlis] (Isfahan, 1972), 32, cited by Abbas M. Milani, "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. The Political Economy of the Ideological Currents of the Constitutional Revolution," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii (1975), 132.

<sup>144</sup> This paragraph is based on Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 124-33, and Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 121-25, 153-63.

The shah then took more desperate action, dismissing the cabinet on December 14-15 and inciting a royalist crowd to threaten the majlis building, while he demanded the assembly's dissolution. The majlis was defended by armed volunteers however, and the bazaars went on strike. The shah was forced to back down, taking an oath before the assembly to observe the constitution.<sup>145</sup>

Tension mounted between Muhammad 'Ali Shah and the constitutional movement in 1908. The majlis was fragmented into three mutually hostile factions and ambivalent in its relations with the numerous *anjumans* (associations) which had formed to support it, while the ulama continued to be divided into pro- and anti-constitutionalist camps. In June the shah moved to just outside Tehran and gathered tribal and urban lower-class supporters. The Russian ambassador, endorsed by the British chargé d'affaires, issued warnings that anti-shah actions would not be tolerated. On June 11 Muhammad 'Ali declared martial law. The bazaar went on strike and constitutionalist volunteers occupied the Baharistan (the majlis building). On June 23 1,000 Iranian Cossacks under the command of their Russian officers surrounded the Baharistan and the adjacent Sipahsalar mosque. Heavy guns bombarded the majlis and its defenders, who were under orders not to shoot at the Russian officers opposing them for fear of touching off a full-scale Russian intervention. Several hundred volunteers were killed before the shah's forces carried the day; leading constitutionalists were arrested, exiled, executed or fled. The Russian Colonel Liakhov of the Cossack Brigade was made military governor of Tehran (though an Iranian later nominally replaced him). Despite demands from the provinces, by November the shah had reneged on his promises to England and Russia to reconvene the majlis and declared that the constitution would not be restored. In this he was assisted by the anti-constitutionalist mujtahid Nuri.<sup>146</sup>

Meanwhile the locus of resistance to the shah had shifted to Tabriz. Soon after the June coup the tribal leader Rahim Khan entered the city to assert authority in the shah's name. Local

<sup>145</sup> This paragraph is based on Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 133-67; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 89-92; Ann K. S. Lambton, "Persian Political Societies 1906-11," pp. 41-89 in *St Antony's Papers*, Middle Eastern Affairs, number 16 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1963), 56-60; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 208-11; Browne, "Chronology," 313-15.

<sup>146</sup> This paragraph draws on Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 199-266; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 96; Keddie, "Popular Participation," 75; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 76-78; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 225-27; and Browne, "Chronology," 315-17.

constitutionalists—artisans, merchants and others—began to oppose this immediately, forming units of *mujahidin* (fighters). The shah's forces were expelled by October, after which they attempted to blockade the city. By November 1908 constitutionalist forces were in control of other cities in Azarbaijan province, while the local anjuman governed Tabriz. In February 1909 however the royalists' blockade became complete. By April people were dying of starvation. On April 20 England agreed that Russian troops should end the siege of Tabriz, and on April 29 they marched into the city to protect Russian and foreign citizens, dispersing the shah's tribal blockaders. Though they no longer faced starvation, the residents soon were unhappy with their Russian occupiers. In May the constitutionalist leaders Sattar Khan, Baqir Khan and Taqizadeh took refuge in the Turkish consulate to protest the occupation.<sup>147</sup>

Though it ended in failure, the resistance of Tabriz bought time for other provinces to revive the constitutionalist opposition, especially at Rasht and Isfahan. In early 1909 the Bakhtiari tribe under Samsam al-Saltana revolted when the shah tried to change their il-khan. They soon gained control of the city and declared for the constitutionalist side. At Rasht on the Caspian, social democrats from Russian Azarbaijan and local Armenian radicals launched an attack against the governor. When they succeeded, they invited a wealthy landowner known as the Sipahdar ("Commander") who had recently abandoned the shah's forces at Tabriz to assume control of their movement. Revolts occurred at Bandar 'Abbas and Bushire on March 17, Shiraz and Hamadan March 25, and Mashhad on April 6. In May the constitutionalist army of Rasht reached Qazvin, and the shah agreed to English and Russian "recommendations" to re-establish constitutional government. But the Sipahdar also wanted foreign troops to evacuate, the shah's own irregulars to disarm and dismissal of certain reactionary ministers. When these demands were not met, the northern constitutionalists and southern Bakhtiaris began to converge on the capital in early July, despite British and Russian warnings "that any further advance will undoubtedly be followed by foreign intervention," and the landing of more Russian troops at Anzali. On July 13 the Bakhtiaris and Rasht volunteers

<sup>147</sup> For these events see Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 228-42; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 247-53, 269-87; *idem*, "Chronology," 316-17.

entered Tehran with minimal initial resistance, and set up headquarters symbolically in the ruins of the Baharistan. After two days of fighting in which 500 men were killed or wounded, Muhammad 'Ali took refuge at the Russian legation, while the Cossack Brigade surrendered to the new minister of war, the Sipahdar. On July 18 the 11-year old son of Muhammad 'Ali was crowned Ahmad Shah, and a regent appointed by an extraordinary grand council of constitutionalist deputies and military leaders, ulama, princes and notables, thus bringing Muhammad 'Ali's counterrevolutionary reign to a close. The victorious constitutionalists executed five or six of their opponents, including the mujtahid Fazlullah Nuri, in most cases for past acts resulting in murders.<sup>148</sup>

In August 1909 elections were held in Tehran for the second majlis. The new electoral law lowered the voting age from 25 to 20 and the wealth qualifications to property worth 250 tumans (50 pounds sterling), or income of 50 tumans a year or payment of ten tumans in taxes. It also increased the representation of the provinces in the majlis, with Azarbaijan getting 19 seats to Tehran's 15 (down from 60). Seats were reserved for each of five tribes, and for one representative each from the Armenian, Nestorian, Zoroastrian and Jewish communities. In September Muhammad 'Ali was given a pension and sent into exile at Odessa. Rahim Khan led Shahsavan tribesmen in raids in the northwest, menacing the city of Ardabil and triggering the dispatch of fresh Russian troops to Iran. In November he was threatening to march on Tehran, but on December 31 government troops defeated him (though he later escaped into Russian territory). Meanwhile the second majlis opened on November 15; Ahmad Shah sent a conciliatory message.<sup>149</sup>

1910 provided a lull in the dramatic events that had transpired in each of the five previous years, but ominous tensions arose both within the constitutionalist ranks and between the majlis and foreign powers. In February Britain and Russia demanded "privileged rights" in their "spheres of influence" to appoint military instructors and build railways in exchange for a loan of 400,000 pounds sterling, conditions which the majlis eventually rejected. On July 15 Sayyid 'Abdullah

<sup>148</sup> See Lambton, "Persian Political Societies," 75-86; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 292-332; *idem*, "Chronology," 317-18; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 242-44; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 85-88.

<sup>149</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 334-36, and 385-95 for the new electoral law of 1909; *idem*, "Chronology," 319-21.

Bihbihani, the cleric who had played a conspicuous role in touching off the revolution in 1905-6, was assassinated, and in retaliation two secular radicals were murdered on August 2. These events exacerbated a growing split between radicals and moderates in the majlis, and alienated certain ulama from the movement. A state of siege was proclaimed in Tehran on August 3 for three months, and government troops clashed with disappointed constitutionalist volunteers in a Tehran park, with 30 lives lost in forcibly disarming them. On August 19 the foreign minister appealed to Russia to withdraw its 3,000 troops from Iran; Russia demanded concessions in return. These were agreed to in late October but the troops were not withdrawn. Meanwhile the British created controversy with an ultimatum (later toned down) that they would organize a security force in the south if order wasn't restored. Tribal unrest plagued the provinces into the fall, in part stirred up by ex-shah Muhammad 'Ali, who left Russia surreptitiously for Rome.<sup>150</sup>

In early 1911 Iran reached agreement on bringing in 11 Swedish officers for its gendarmerie and 16 American financial experts under W. Morgan Shuster to organize the tax administration. Shuster arrived in May and quickly gained the trust of the majlis with his independent stance toward Russia and Britain. By June he had been granted extensive powers over the budget, tax collection and customs as treasurer-general of Iran. Russia soon objected however to his proposal to place a new treasury gendarmerie for the collection of taxes under the command of Captain C. B. Stokes, the British legation's military attaché. In July internal stability was shaken when Salar al-Daula seized Hamadan and proclaimed his brother Muhammad 'Ali as shah. Several days later the ex-shah himself appeared in Iran with tribal supporters and tacit Russian backing.<sup>151</sup> When the government protested this violation of its 1909 protocol with England and Russia, the two powers replied that it was an internal Iranian affair. In August, however, Muhammad 'Ali's forces were three times defeated by Bakhtiari and Armenian fighters under Yifrim Khan, the chief of Tehran police, and Arshad al-

<sup>150</sup> Browne, "Chronology," 321-27; *idem*, *The Persian Revolution*, 349; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 106-12; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 107.

<sup>151</sup> In a meeting in Vienna in July 1911 with Russian diplomat N. H. de Hartwig, Muhammad 'Ali was told "that the Russian government could give him no direct support, but that Russia would not stand in his way. He was free to return to Russia if he thought he could succeed. If he failed, Russia would deny all responsibility;" McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 135, citing Viennese police records. Muhammad 'Ali passed through Russia and reached Iran on July 19.

Daula, Muhammad 'Ali's best general, was captured and shot on September 5-6. The next day Muhammad 'Ali took refuge on a Russian ship on the Caspian, and went to Russian soil. Salar al-Daula continued to capture cities in September with an army of Kurds and Lurs, but was defeated twice at the end of the month and again in November, definitively ending the restoration attempt.<sup>152</sup>

A new crisis exploded in the fall however, this one caused by continued tensions between the reformer Shuster and the Russian government. Clashes occurred in October between Shuster's treasury gendarmes and Cossacks sent by the Russian consul Pokhitanov over Shuster's order to confiscate the property of the ex-shah's brother and supporter Shu'a al-Saltana. Shuster's efforts to enforce tax collection against the elite also earned him the enmity of powerful Iranian statesmen, including the Sipahdar and 'Ala al-Daula. On November 5 the Russians issued an ultimatum demanding an apology to their consul for "insults" suffered in the October clash. On November 23 the Iranian foreign minister duly offered apologies. By this date there were 12,000 Russian troops in northern Iran and small detachments of British Indian soldiers at Shiraz. At the end of November the prime minister Samsam al-Saltana approached both the British and Russian legations with a proposal to use Bakhtiari forces to disband the majlis; both promised not to intervene if he did. The Russians then took the initiative, issuing a second ultimatum demanding the dismissal of Shuster, assurances that foreigners would not be hired without Anglo-Russian approval, and an indemnity for the costs of maintaining Russian troops in the north. This was unanimously rejected by the majlis which voted instead to extend its two-year session then ending until the resolution of the crisis. Huge anti-Russian demonstrations took place in Tehran as Russian troops advanced toward the city. As the crisis deepened the Russians softened their terms slightly, though continuing to insist on Shuster's dismissal, while the majlis appointed a five-member commission to work with the cabinet, which wanted to accept the ultimatum. On December 22 this committee and the cabinet accepted the

<sup>152</sup> This paragraph, and the next two, dealing with the events of 1911 and the aftermath of the Constitutional Revolution, draws upon Browne, "Chronology," 327-36; *idem*, *The Persian Crisis of December, 1911: How it Arose and Whither it May Lead Us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912); Keddie, "The Impact of the West on Iranian Social History"; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 124-202 *passim*; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 268-70; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 102-11. One may also consult *The Strangling of Persia* (New York: The Century Co., 1912), W. Morgan Shuster's personal account.

Russian demands. In the next three days the regent dissolved the majlis and sent a force to clear its buildings, while Shuster was informed of his dismissal.

Resistance to Russian coercion was initially widespread, but it was met with brutal repression. At Tabriz, 44 leading constitutionalists were executed. Executions also occurred at Rasht. The shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad was bombarded and looted by the Russians on March 29, 1912 in retaliation for the assassination of a Russian officer. Up to 20,000 Russian troops remained in northern Iran to disband anjumans, establish press censorship and restore landlord control over rural areas. The Sipahdar worked closely with them for which he was rewarded in his home area on the Caspian. The British did nothing to soften these measures, garrisoning the south and finding their own collaborators among the Bakhtiari in the central government. Abrahamian notes that "National opposition to foreign intervention was transformed from overt resistance to covert resentment."<sup>153</sup> After six tumultuous years, the Constitutional Revolution was finally checkmated.

#### IV.B. Social Forces in the Constitutional Revolution

Quite interesting and complex debates exist regarding the nature of the Constitutional Revolution and the social forces that contended in it. The standard interpretation for many years in both the basic works of Iranian historians such as Kasravi, Kirmani and Malikzadeh, and Western accounts from Sykes onward stressed the role of ideas, especially Western concepts of constitutionalism and nationalism. This view highlights the role of intellectuals in the revolution. Orthodox Marxists, both Iranian and Soviet, by contrast, have generally interpreted the events as a bourgeois revolution led by a merchant class blocked in its aspirations for democracy by landed classes and imperial powers. These positions, paradoxically, are not incompatible if one considers the intelligentsia's ideas as representing the Iranian bourgeoisie.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 110.

<sup>154</sup> This line of reasoning is suggested by the work of Mitani in "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution."

More recently historians of several perspectives have constructed more complex explanations. The works of Keddie and Lambton, outside the Marxist tradition, correctly identify the several classes in alliance in the revolution, though more in empirical fashion than with an underlying theoretical model. Closer to the Marxist perspective, Abrahamian argues that the key social forces were two "middle classes"—a traditional bazaar-centered one which he terms "the propertied middle class" including merchants, artisans and ulama, and a modern intelligentsia, with the former far more powerful.<sup>155</sup> Afshari radicalizes this position by stressing that the core of the movement was made up of the pishivaran—artisans, traders, small shopkeepers.<sup>156</sup> This is an advance in that it breaks down Abrahamian's "propertied middle class" into its constituent elements, not all of whom had similar interests or outlooks.

My basic position is that if we examine the actions of each class or group in the Constitutional Revolution we find that it was fought above all by the artisans and intelligentsia, against the court, foreign powers and landlords, and that the merchants were divided and ultimately wavered, as did the ulama, many of whom gradually went into opposition to the movement. The tribal chiefs fought on both sides, as did probably the urban marginal classes. Peasants and tribespeople were largely not involved, although some peasants were and some tribal armies were engaged on either side. The working class gave its support to the revolution but was numerically limited in impact. So, rather than a bourgeois revolution, it was more of a popular, democratic, mass urban movement fought by a pre-capitalist class in decline (the artisans) and two small capitalist classes in formation (the intelligentsia and working class), and led by two classes/groups that were divided (ulama and merchants). The revolution thus reposed on a *mixed* alliance in terms of classes and their constituent modes of production.

The line-up of social forces then consists of a constitutionalist alliance (artisans, intelligentsia and workers, and some merchants, ulama, and marginalized urban classes), the royalist social base

<sup>155</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 80; *idem*, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran," pp. 381-414 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 10 (1979), 403, 412-13.

<sup>156</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 187.

(the court and its retainers and some of the ulama, tribes and marginalized urban classes), the uninvolved peasant and tribal masses, and foreign powers. In exploring the contours of these actors and their alliances a range of data must be evaluated: participation in crowds and basts, representation and positions adopted in the majlis, the formation and activities of organizations such as the anjuman, unions, parties and armed groups, ideological positions among the leadership, and the available evidence as to popular political culture and consciousness. In now considering the case of each class or social group we shall try to identify the nature and extent of its role in the movement or against it, and the underlying logic of this.

**Merchants.** Iran's merchants played an important role in launching the Constitutional Revolution—they were prominent at the three basts of 1905-6, and in the first majlis. Dissatisfied with the bankruptcy of the Qajar state, desirous of security of property, many of them also had grievances with foreign capital's advantageous tariff rates and domination of banking. Some however (the "comprador" fraction in the import/export business) had profitable relations with foreign trading firms. Six merchants took leading roles in the majlis, and most of them were members of its progressive wing, demanding an end to foreign loans, establishment of a national bank, and the dismissal of Naus from the customs and other departments.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, on the bank question we are told that the wealthy held back their support and ultimately it was never funded.<sup>158</sup> Merchants were particularly active at Tabriz, helping organize and fund the Tabriz resistance, while those abroad, especially at Istanbul, also supported the movement. Both Afshari and Mehraïn suggest that merchants occupied a contradictory position in Qajar society. Economically an elite, politically they were powerless. They thus vacillated in the revolution, and ultimately came to feel threatened by it, both as landowners and as businessmen.<sup>159</sup> It is possible that there was a silent, more conservative majority of merchants outside the majlis. Smaller-scale merchants probably tended to support the revolution longer, though some must have followed the ulama out of the movement and others were

<sup>157</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 120-21; Nashat, "From Bazaar to Market," 71.

<sup>158</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 137.

<sup>159</sup> Afshari, "The *Pishiyarân* and Merchants," 137; Mehraïn, "Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 135, 181-82.

alienated by the continued political and economic instability. Larger merchants and those tied to foreign capital probably went into opposition sooner and more forcefully. Interestingly, even at the 1906 Legation bast, large merchants such as Amin al-Zarb and others who arrived only on the ninth day, were the objects of some suspicion.<sup>160</sup> On the eve of the coup in 1911 the German ambassador in Tehran wrote: "At the bottom of their hearts the great landowners of the country, the clergy, the wealthier businessmen, are all sick and tired of the ruling parliamentary demagogu..."<sup>161</sup> Iran's merchants, then, should be seen as a class divided in its sympathies, which ultimately withdrew much of its early support for the revolution.

**Artisans, journeymen, working class.** Artisans in their guilds, craftspersons, apprentices, small shopkeepers—all known as the *pishivaran*—and the nascent urban working class were the mass backbone of the revolution. From the huge Tehran bast of 1906 to the futile resistance to the Russians at Tabriz in 1911, artisans were in the forefront of the movement. They closed their shops, joined *anjumans*, faced armed troops, composed constitutionalist crowds. The reasons for their participation are not far to seek: Chapter Four documented the massive erosion of craft jobs under the flood of European imports. Kirmani in fact judges the textile guild "the most revolutionary group" after religious students in the July 1906 confrontations with the army;<sup>162</sup> textile workers had been the most decimated craft in the nineteenth century. At the Legation bast, each guild, "even the cobblers, walnut sellers, and tinkers," had a tent.<sup>163</sup> Tehran's 105 guilds were given 32 seats in the first majlis, to the merchants' ten. Anyone possessing a shop paying rent equal to the average in its locality, could vote. Sellers of books, lamps, rubble and watchmakers made many speeches in the first majlis, ranging themselves with the progressives.<sup>164</sup> Sattar Khan, a horse-dealer, and Baqir Khan, a stone mason, led the Tabriz armed resistance which relied on the artisans and shopkeepers

<sup>160</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 199.

<sup>161</sup> McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 190 note 1, citing German archives.

<sup>162</sup> Nazim al-Islam Kirmani, *Tarikh-i Bidari-yi Iranian* [History of the Awakening of the Iranians], three volumes (Tehran (?): Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran, 1346/1967), III, 242. Volume three of this basic history has been translated by Seyed Taghi Barakchian, "An Annotated Translation of Nazim al-Islam Kirmani's *Tarikh-i Bidari-i Iranian* (History of Iranian Awakening), Vol. III," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, State University of New York at Binghamton (1983). The present reference is found in the Barakchian translation, 69.

<sup>163</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 84, quoting Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 110.

<sup>164</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 120.

for its mass base in the mujahidin units. After the 1909 restoration of the constitution, however, the guilds were effectively barred from representation as such in the assembly, and this undoubtedly undermined the militancy of the second majlis. Nevertheless, in the repression at Tabriz in 1911-12, 18 out of 35 Tabrizis executed were artisans and shopkeepers.<sup>165</sup> The artisans then did not waver, but rather were cut out of the new coalition of tribal leaders and other elite elements that gained the upper hand in the movement's last stages.

Below the artisans, their apprentices and journeymen played a role as well. Masters paid their apprentices half-wages to keep them in the 1906 Legation bast. M. Heravi-Khurasani recorded some reluctance on that occasion:

The [junior carpenters], being angry at being taken away from their livelihood wanted to know what they had to gain from the whole venture. The [sawyers], being illiterate and irrational, were reluctant to accept any logical arguments. If these two irresponsible groups had walked out, our whole movement would have suffered. Fortunately, we persuaded them to remain in *bast*.<sup>166</sup>

Journeymen and laborers did not get the vote in 1906, which was based on property, nor did certain lower-status guilds, such as porters and camel-drivers, for the same reason. These groups then shaded off politically, as well as economically, into the less predictable marginalized urban classes, though their eventual (in some cases) occupational status as artisans and integration into the bazaar economy probably placed them more often on the constitutionalist side.

Iran's small working class embraced the revolution more enthusiastically, engaging in a vast number of strike activities from 1906 to 1910, and organizing in Iran's first trade unions. These events were discussed in Chapter Four, but they also form part of the movement from below in the revolution. Fishermen in the Russian-owned Caspian fisheries, dockers and boatmen at Anzali, Tehran's printers and telegraphers, and Tabriz tannery workers conducted vigorous strikes. The first two groups were exposed to social-democratic ideas emanating from the Russian Caucasus, while the

<sup>165</sup> Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 743. See also Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 98 note 110.

<sup>166</sup> M. Heravi-Khurasani, *Tarikh-i Paydayish-i Mashrutiyyat-i Iran* [History of the Beginning of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution] (Tehran, 1953), 50, quoted by Abrahamian, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution," 407.

printers shared the radical intellectuals' milieu at the newspapers, and in fact issued their own paper during a 1910 strike for better hours, pay and other rights.<sup>167</sup> The early labor movement rose and fell with the Constitutional Revolution and was crushed in 1911 by the Russian intervention. The activities and programs of the first Iranian social democrats, aimed at the working class, will be discussed below. It may be concluded that the working class itself, still quite small numerically in this period, largely supported the revolution but was limited by its size from playing as decisive a role as the artisans, ulama and merchants.

**Urban lower classes, women, youth.** Abrahamian has made a strong case that the lower classes were generally monarchist, easily manipulated against the revolution by the upper classes. Their presence has been documented at the attempted anti-majlis coup of December 1907, where luti, "hired ruffians," and "unskilled workers and the poorest of the poor from the Tehran bazaar" were mobilized for several days, and likewise in the shah's successful coup of June 1908.<sup>168</sup> In the civil war at Tabriz in 1908, the royalists came from the poorer districts of Davachi and Sarkhab, "crowded with dyers, weavers, coolies, laborers, muleteers, and the unemployed."<sup>169</sup> The high price of bread was an issue whether the government was constitutional or despotic, as far as the poor were concerned. It is also plausible that the urban marginal classes accorded traditional respect both to the monarch and to their local ulama, who could mobilize them when necessary.

Keddie has questioned however whether lower class participation against the revolution was this clear-cut, judging that "There was also considerable mass popular support in the cities from lower classes, although this was not universal."<sup>170</sup> In the July 1906 events Browne records the actions of "tradesmen, artisans, and people of yet humbler rank," while "humble trades-folk," presumably just above the poorest of the poor, defended as well as attacked the majlis in December 1907.<sup>171</sup> Sattar Khan, the hero of the Tabriz resistance, was himself a luti as well as a horse-dealer,

<sup>167</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 9-11.

<sup>168</sup> See Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 94-96; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 163, 166.

<sup>169</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, "The Crowd in the Persian Revolution I," pp. 128-150 in *Iranian Studies*, volume II, number 4 (Autumn 1969), 143.

<sup>170</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 151; *idem*, "Popular Participation," 76.

<sup>171</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 118, 164, citing an eyewitness correspondent.

and his second-in-command, Baqir Khan, was also a luti; though both served as kadkhudas in their districts, they were certainly not well-to-do.<sup>172</sup> I would conclude that the urban underclass had a variety of reactions to the constitutional movement: passive support, active participation, and indifference were all possible in addition to the counter-revolutionary role that Abrahamian ascribes to what well may have been a minority, albeit a significant one. They could be mobilized out of religious convictions to support either side, and their economic plight gave them both some cause to support the popular forces and yet made them susceptible to offers of food and money from the direction of the court.

The cases of women and urban youth are somewhat more clear-cut. Women engaged in a remarkable array of activities, nearly all in favor of the constitutional movement. Their presence has been recorded at most of the key events, including the Tehran basts of 1905-6, the Tabriz demonstrations that secured the constitution, and the December 1911 resistance.<sup>173</sup> Exclusion from the vote did not deter their participation in political and other forms of education.<sup>174</sup> The first Iranian-run school for girls was formed in 1907 and by 1910 there were fifty such schools. A weekly newspaper *Danish* (Knowledge) appeared in 1910, written exclusively for women.<sup>175</sup> Women formed their own *anjumans*, by the dozens, according to Shuster, "with a central organization by which they were controlled."<sup>176</sup> Pro-constitutional actions ranged from selling their jewelry to raise money for the proposed national bank, to giving fiery speeches, to actual fighting in the ranks of the national volunteers.<sup>177</sup> One source records a battle fought in Azarbaijan after which it was found that twenty

<sup>172</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 233-35; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 97-98. Sattar Khan's father was a "wandering cloth-dealer." Abrahamian himself notes that lutis "were to be found on both sides during the Civil War." Ervand Abrahamian, "The Crowd in Iranian Politics 1905-1953," pp. 184-210 in *Past & Present*, number 41 (December 1968), 195 note 37.

<sup>173</sup> See Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 69, 97, 159; Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, 198.

<sup>174</sup> The deputy from Hamadan, Hajj Vakil al-Ra'aya, did in fact raise the question of votes for women in the majlis on August 3, 1911, to a stunned reaction from that assembly. See the interesting accounts of this in Mangol Bayat-Philipp, "Women and Revolution in Iran, 1905-1911," pp. 295-308 in Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie, editors, *Women in the Muslim World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 301.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 299-300.

<sup>176</sup> Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, 193.

<sup>177</sup> During the national bank appeal, Kasravi relates that a washerwoman spoke in a mosque and pledged one tuman, exhorting others to give money: *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 181-82. A 1910 speech by the daughter of Shaikh Hadi has been preserved, in which she condemns the rivalries of government figures and the presence of foreign troops in Iran and calls for unity to combat the country's problems: Daughter of Aga Shaykh Hadi, "Il faut prendre exemple sur les femmes," pp. 282-284 in *Revue du Monde Musulman*, volume XII, number 10 (October 1910).

of the dead were women dressed as men. A woman also assassinated a royalist mulla speaking to the crowd at Tupkhana Square just before the 1908 coup, and was "immediately arrested and put to death on the spot."<sup>178</sup> Shuster recorded the actions of three hundred women who descended on the majlis during the December 1911 crisis and demanded to see the president of the assembly:

In his reception-hall they confronted him, and lest he and his colleagues should doubt their meaning, these cloistered Persian mothers, wives and daughters exhibited threateningly their revolvers, tore aside their veils, and confessed their decision to kill their own husbands and sons, and leave behind their own dead bodies, if the deputies wavered in their duty to uphold the liberty and dignity of the Persian people and nation.<sup>179</sup>

All the evidence adds up to a picture of dynamic activism by urban women, presumably cutting across class lines but located especially in the bazaar.

Another group which did not have the vote but supported the revolution in the main was the young. This was especially true of students, both in the religious schools and seminaries and in the new modern schools and university. At the Legation bast of 1906 only students and faculty from the Dar al-Fonun and schools of agriculture and political science were admitted after the first week: "These new arrivals, according to Nazim al-Islam Kirmani, converted the legation into "one vast open-air school of political science" by giving lectures on European constitutional systems and expressing ideas that had been too dangerous to express before in Iran."<sup>180</sup> In the effort to establish the national bank we are told that the *tullab* (religious seminarians) and the students of the *dabistan* (modern schools) sold their books to raise money.<sup>181</sup> Schoolchildren carried banners in the critical demonstrations of December 1911 that read "Independence or Death."<sup>182</sup> While some of the *tullab* eventually entered into the opposition with members of the ulama, their teachers, others, plus the vast majority of those in the secular educational sector, remained loyal to the constitutional movement.

**Intelligentsia and ulama.** These two groups were active in leading the movement. Iran's nascent intelligentsia of newspaper editors and journalists, poets and translators, educators and

<sup>178</sup> Bayat-Philipp, "Women and Revolution," 302.

<sup>179</sup> Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, 198.

<sup>180</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 84, quoting Kirmani, *Tarikh-i Bidari-yi Iranian*, III, 74 (see also Barakchian translation, 116).

<sup>181</sup> Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 181-82.

<sup>182</sup> McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 194.

professionals, and some of its bureaucrats, made numerous contributions. Certain of these will be analyzed in more detail in the section below on ideology, organizations and popular culture. There it will become clear that the bulk of this group wholeheartedly backed the constitutional movement, providing most of its leading ideas and staffing its institutions. Intellectuals like Sani' al-Daula and his brothers were instrumental in drawing up the regulations for the majlis and serving in the assembly, and to a lesser extent, in some of the first constitutional cabinets.<sup>183</sup> Others as we shall see participated in the anjumans and early political parties, providing leadership and knowledge about constitutional, nationalist and social-democratic ideas. Thus, for example:

The composition of the Revolutionary Committee reflected both the ideological homogeneity and the sociological diversity of the early intelligentsia. The fifty-seven included fifteen civil servants, eight educators, four translators and writers, one doctor, fourteen clergymen who had some knowledge of modern sciences, one tribal chief, three merchants, and four craftsmen. All were acquainted with Western civilization through the Dar al-Fonun, or the study of a European language, or the reading of recent translations, or the influence of al-Afghani and Malkam Khan.<sup>184</sup>

It was "certain more or less Europeanized Persians of the educated official class" who fatefully changed the demand at the Legation bast from a House of Justice to a Constituent National Assembly.<sup>185</sup> Others were organizers of the Tabriz resistance, including 'Ali "Monsieur," so-named for his knowledge of French and study of the French revolution. Another influence at Tabriz, in the disparaging words of the St. Petersburg *Novoe Vremia* (New Times) was "Tatar semi-intellectuals from the Caucasus."<sup>186</sup> The only part of the intelligentsia in the opposition ranks were some of the high civil servants tied by family, culture and service to the court. Even here, while some worked in the conservative party of the majlis and served in the cabinet, others supported the constitutional movement. The intelligentsia, taken as a whole, threw its weight behind the revolution, standing to gain from the constitutional freedoms of assembly, press, education, and participation in the institutions thereby won—the majlis, anjumans, schools and newspapers.

<sup>183</sup> On this family, see Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 129.

<sup>184</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 78.

<sup>185</sup> This was related to Browne by Taqizadeh: *The Persian Revolution*, 122 note 1.

<sup>186</sup> *Novoe Vremia*, October 18, 1908, quoted by Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920. The Shaping of National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 68.

The role played by the ulama was complex, contradictory and shifting, which has led to conflicting interpretations. According to Browne they were constitutionalist and to Algar they were anti-shah, while Arjomand argues that though they may have started with these orientations, many ended up anti-constitutional and pro-shah.<sup>187</sup> The best way to reconcile these positions is to note the different factions, different periods and different salient issues (the shah, foreigners) within the ulama. Many—perhaps most—of the ulama, from the leading mujtahids to lesser clerics to the young students—were at some point on the side of the revolution. Ulama had both ideological and material motivations to support the movement, especially in its early stages. It will be recalled that pensions had gone unpaid for three years by 1905-6. As Algar has shown the ulama of Qajar Iran had for several generations opposed the state on a variety of popular issues, especially the threats posed by foreign penetration of society; Arjomand notes that many constitutionalist ulama felt the majlis and constitution would further this cause.<sup>188</sup> The agreement of ‘the two sayyids’ ‘Abdullah Bihbihani and Muhammad Tabatabai in early 1905 to work together for change is considered by Kasravi the start of the constitutional movement.<sup>189</sup> They took leading roles in the three bastis of 1905-6. Popular preachers, such as Malik al-Mutakallimin and Sayyid Jamal al-Din Isfahani, were active in anjuman, and very adept at mobilizing crowds into action; Sayyid Jamal al-Din in particular ‘‘had an enormous influence with the ‘*kulāh-namadīs*,’ or felt-capped artisans and humble folk of the *bāzārs*, to whom he spoke in graphic and forceful language which they could understand, and who loved him accordingly.’’<sup>190</sup> Both he and Malik al-Mutakallimin (whose name means ‘‘King of the Orators’’) were executed by the shah after the 1908 coup. In the provinces, two constitutionalist mujtahids were tortured and killed by the brutal royalist governor of Maragheh in 1906, ulama led protests in Mashhad and Isfahan in late 1908, and some joined in the actual fighting in the Tabriz

<sup>187</sup> The works of Browne, Algar and Arjomand will be cited in this discussion. Others who have found the ulama generally on the side of the revolution include Keddie, ‘‘Popular Participation,’’ 68; *idem*, ‘‘Introduction’’ to *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society*, 6-7; and Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran. Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 25.

<sup>188</sup> Algar, *Religion and State*, *passim*; Said Amir Arjomand, ‘‘The Ulama’s Traditionalist Opposition to Parliamentarianism: 1907-1909,’’ pp. 174-190 in *Middle Eastern Studies*, volume 17, number 2 (April 1981), 185.

<sup>189</sup> Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 49. It should be noted that Bihbihani’s reasons were largely personal rivalries with the prime minister (it will be recalled that he had been pro-British in the Tobacco concession agitation), while Tabatabai was more generally and sincerely populist in orientation: *ibid.*, 48-51.

<sup>190</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 116.

resistance.<sup>191</sup> In Najaf, three of the four leading mujtahids were constitutionalist; in 1908 they effectively excommunicated the shah in a telegram, charging

... that his 'conduct wounds the heart of the believer and is an offense against the absent Imám,' and that they would 'leave no stone unturned to obtain a representative government,' and ending 'God has cursed the tyrants; you are victorious for the moment, but you may not remain so.'<sup>192</sup>

These top-ranking ulama would remain in the constitutionalist ranks through 1911.

In the fall of 1906, Browne's eyewitness reported "The *mullás* and the more Europeanized classes are on the best and most cordial terms."<sup>193</sup> By 1907 however there was an anti-constitutional current led by Shaikh Fazlullah Nuri that launched a traditionalist, anti-parliamentary movement to defend Islam. Three hundred Tehran ulama took bast to protest provisions of the constitution such as the equality of all religious groups and the extensive jurisdiction of the secular courts (even the constitutionalist ulama were uneasy at these provisions, and became somewhat more passive in their support). They formed their own anjuman and joined with Muhammad 'Ali against the majlis. Some, such as the imam jom'a of Tehran, had ties of wealth and family to the court; some could be bribed. Others wanted to protect their judicial prerogatives, while still others had material interests as landlords to make common cause with the shah.<sup>194</sup> Nuri himself seems to have been motivated largely out of jealousy for "the two sayyids," to whom he considered himself superior in learning.<sup>195</sup> The defense of Islam endangered by "reprehensible innovation" (the following of Western constitutional ideas) provided an ideological motivation as well, which will be examined below. Nuri and other ulama roused the royalist crowd in the failed coup of December 1907, calling the assembly's delegates infidels, atheists and Babis. A number of mujtahids and clerics—Arjomand

<sup>191</sup> Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 139-40; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 85; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 271.

<sup>192</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 262. See also *ibid.*, 219, and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 64, 70 note 11.

<sup>193</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 127.

<sup>194</sup> McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 67, 73; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 113, 148 note 1, 262; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 62; Arjomand, "The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition," 177-86.

<sup>195</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 148 note 1. Nuri himself said before being hanged: "Neither was I a 'reactionary', nor Sayyed 'Abdollah (Behbehani) and Sayyed Mohammad (Tabataba'i) 'constitutionalists': it was merely that they wished to expel me, and I them, and there was no question of 'reactionary' or 'constitutional' principles": Arjomand, "The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition," 184.

says "the great majority of the middle- and high-ranking 'ulama'"<sup>196</sup>—were won over to Nuri's position in 1908, and they in turn caused some members of the bazaar to waver in their support, providing the shah a base for his June coup. Nuri thus became openly pro-monarchy in 1908, excommunicating all journalists and the constitutionalist *maraja'* of Najaf. As the revolution's forces regathered strength in 1909 however, many of Nuri's followers began to distance themselves from him, and after the deposition of the shah in July, most quietly withdrew from politics, while Nuri himself was hanged. The ulama as a whole seemed discouraged from participating to as great an extent as before, and the constitutionalist ones who did tended to the conservative side in the majlis, especially after a secular radical assassinated Bihbihani in August 1910.<sup>197</sup> Thus the ulama, who had been instrumental in winning the battles of 1905-6, thereafter split, aligning on both sides from 1907 to 1909, and becoming less of a factor on either side in the last two years of the struggle.

**The Qajar court and its retainers.** The Iranian state as it had been constituted until 1906—the Qajar royal family, courtiers, ministers and key institutions, notably the army—was the backbone of the anti-constitutionalist alliance, especially under Muhammad 'Ali from 1907 to 1909. The very existence of a constitution, with its assumptions that "The sovereignty is a trust confided (as a Divine gift) by the people to the person of the King," and "The powers of the realm are all derived from the people,"<sup>198</sup> with the attendant limits on the legislative power of the monarch, materially and ideologically undermined the position of the Qajars. It not only gave the majlis collective power over the national budget and the cabinet's activities, it secured individual rights to life and property, freedom of expression and association—all at the expense of the formerly absolute (if somewhat undefined) powers of the royal family. Muhammad 'Ali at first refused to sign the Supplementary Fundamental Laws in 1907, expressing his preference for a German-type constitution. When this failed he organized an armed opposition to the majlis, mobilizing royalist crowds at Tupkhana Square in December 1907, whose base was among his own retainers and the remnants of the state-

<sup>196</sup> Arjomand, "The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition," 174.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-87.

<sup>198</sup> These are articles 35 and 26 of the Supplementary Fundamental Laws, in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 377, 375.

controlled royal workshops—"the thousands employed in the royal palace with its extensive gardens, stables, kitchens, storehouses, armories, and workshops."<sup>199</sup> At the apex of the state were the governors, often Qajar princes, and all those who lived from its pensions, some 2,000 courtiers who saw their means of livelihood circumscribed by the majlis's budget cutting.<sup>200</sup> As noted above, the shah also drew support from conservative ulama such as Nuri and the urban classes they could mobilize. And finally, standing behind the shah was the Russian-officered Cossack Brigade and indeed, formal Russian diplomatic and military "aid" (to be discussed below): "Muhammad 'Alí Sháh ... was commonly reported to have declared that he would rather be a Russian vassal with autocratic powers over his own people than the constitutional ruler of a free and independent nation."<sup>201</sup> In the event, the 750 Cossacks and 5,000 regular and tribal troops proved unable to prevent the constitutionalist armies from taking Tehran and deposing the shah in July 1909, but the Russian army's 12,000 soldiers in Iran were adequate in their turn for forcing the acceptance of the 1911 ultimatum, disbanding the majlis and ending the revolution. Thus, when the Iranian state proved vulnerable to the constitutionalist challenge both politically and militarily, its imperialist backers England and Tsarist Russia stepped in to preserve it.

**Landlords, magnates and notables.** The state's greatest allies in the Constitutional Revolution were the landed class and "notables" generally. When the majlis abolished the *tiyul* land-revenue grant in 1907, it alienated completely the landed elite of Iran by legally undermining its right to a portion of the agricultural surplus. Further damaged in some cases by a reduction or loss of their court pensions, landowners as a class supported the royalist cause and mobilized their own considerable numbers of retainers in its favor. Individual members of this class staffed the court's high bureaucracy and its cabinets. Qajars and government officials, many of whom were landowners, constituted 27 to 40 percent of the first majlis.<sup>202</sup> After 1909 landlords even appeared among the

<sup>199</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 94, 89-91.

<sup>200</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 240-42; Abrahamian, "The Crowd in Iranian Politics," 196.

<sup>201</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 251.

<sup>202</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhi*, 119 table 4; Ashraf and Hekmat, "Merchants and Artisans," 742, count 13 percent as landowners and another 20 percent as bureaucrats. Abrahamian considers 40 percent to have been "landowners, civil servants, and a few professionals:" "The Crowd in the Persian Revolution I," 142.

constitutionalist leadership, most notably in the person of the Sipahdar, who served as minister of war and then prime minister, severely diluting the radical potential of the movement.<sup>203</sup> The proportion of landowners, tribal leaders and the Qajar landed bureaucracy in the second majlis may have been as high as 83 percent.<sup>204</sup> The replacement of the guild artisans and progressive ulama by these groups further sapped the momentum of the constitutionalist cause. Finally, Qajars and other landed magnates retained most of the provincial governorships throughout the 1905-11 period. In more isolated provincial settings the revolution penetrated only obscurely, and conservative elites were able to run things much as before by ignoring the constitution and majlis and dampening the spread of institutions such as anjumans and independent newspapers. To this end they often played on sectarian divisions in the cities, and mobilized local tribes to support them, a process studied below.

**Tribes and peasants.** These two dominated classes had at best auxiliary parts in the revolution, isolated geographically and by their modes of production, while their corresponding elites—landlords and tribal chiefs—were far more active. Iran's tribes and their chiefly khans played a variety of roles in the period 1905-11: many of them were uninvolved, while others used the revolution to make local inroads through pillage or to take a larger share in the local surplus, and a few of them vied for real power, either on a provincial or even the national level. The first two of these possible roles (noninvolvement, local inroads) were not political in any real sense; those who pillaged and raided merely took advantage of the unsettled conditions provided by the revolution. This type of activity was prevalent in Baluchistan, Kurdistan and Luristan, among other places. Even on the provincial and national level the tribes were basically following their chiefs in a quest for the political power and enhanced prestige that might accrue from backing one side or the other. In the provinces Kurds vied among themselves for power at Kirmanshah, Qashqai and Khamseh clashed at Shiraz, Arabs fought Bakhtiari in Khuzistan. Sometimes they claimed to support the revolution while seeking local independence, sometimes they were manipulated by royalist governors.<sup>205</sup> The

<sup>203</sup> Muhammad Vali Khan, the Sipahdar, was considered by the *Yorkshire Daily Post* (November 17, 1909), "the richest man in Persia." Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 299. Browne correctly considers him more of a figure-head and opportunist than a constitutionalist: *ibid.*, 437-38.

<sup>204</sup> This is Mehrain's calculation: "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 192.

central government was often powerless to restore order in these areas. On the national level, Muhammad 'Ali used Turcomans, Kurds, Shahsavans and others against the constitutionalists at Tabriz, and after his fall from power relied on tribal forces for his attempted restoration. These tribal armies were traditionally motivated by the promise of booty and plunder; Liakhov told the troops departing for the siege of Tabriz in October, 1908, "Whatever wealth is contained within the walls of Tabriz, all shall be yours."<sup>206</sup> On the other side the Bakhtiari of the Isfahan area achieved national prominence in 1909 by fighting to restore the constitution. Their leaders were motivated in a few cases by genuine liberal views, but also by alliances with the British seeking to weaken Russian influence, and materially by the loss of revenues from the disrupted trade in their areas. The confused images that inspired the ordinary tribesman to participate in this undertaking have been suggested by Bausani: "It is even said that, in order to persuade the Bakhtiārī to fight for the constitution (*Mashrūṭe*), they were told that this mysterious *Mashrūṭe* was a venerable old man, who was a saint and a close friend of the *shah*."<sup>207</sup> Meanwhile the dominance of the Bakhtiari chiefs in the government after 1909 activated the opposition of other tribes in the provinces, especially Fars. Once again tribal rivalries and struggles for power took precedence over abstract issues such as constitutionalism versus despotism. The British used the resulting insecurity to intervene in southern politics in 1910-11.<sup>208</sup> To sum up, the tribes, while not deeply motivated to fight on one side more than the other, played a destabilizing role overall in the events of 1905-11, contributing to the internal problems that created the climate for intervention and counter-revolution.

Peasants are generally held to have been uninvolved in the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>209</sup> Certain radical actions were however carried out by peasants in the course of the conflict. These

<sup>205</sup> Afshari provides evidence on these cases, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 247-75, as does McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 100-107.

<sup>206</sup> Cited by Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 258. On these royalist forces, see McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 142, 156-57; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutionalist Revolution," 235-39; Tapper, "Black Sheep, White Sheep and Red-Heads," 70.

<sup>207</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 171.

<sup>208</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 107-8; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 281-90.

<sup>209</sup> Kazemi and Abrahamian, "The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry"; Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 157; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 299.

included expulsion of overseers and tax collectors from several villages in 1905, the organization of a few rural anjumans which levied their own taxes, and the refusal to pay rents and seizing of landlords' storehouses in certain northern districts.<sup>210</sup> Peasants around Tabriz sometimes resisted the royalist tribes that were ravaging the countryside in 1908. Afshari notes "reports of sporadic peasant disturbances in Isfahan, Yazd and some areas of Azerbaijan."<sup>211</sup> The abolition of tiyuls in 1907 benefitted some of them, but peasants did not get the vote, and Afshari maintains that in general the majlis "did its best to quell disturbances caused by the peasants' refusal to pay the landlords; the Majlis' actions caused great dissatisfaction among the peasants."<sup>212</sup> A messianic revolt of peasants near Rasht in the summer and autumn of 1907 was put down by the Rasht anjuman.<sup>213</sup> Abrahamian, in fact, has gathered evidence that some peasants, especially near cities, were persuaded by the ulama to oppose the revolution, while others may also, as in the past, have been coerced by their landlords with the same result.<sup>214</sup> Overall, the lack of articulation of peasants' interests on the national level and the difficulties of organizing peasants across isolated villages in most parts of the country did keep the role of the peasantry as a class from escalating beyond the scattered actions mentioned here. Thus the accepted interpretation of "peasant noninvolvement," while it must be qualified to include the radical local events that did occur, is basically sustainable.

**The "Powers": Britain and Russia.** There were two powerful external actors in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. Of these, England played the subordinate role. Its support of the movement was at best ambiguous and at worst veered into outright hostility. Its most positive actions came early, as in its facilitation of the 1906 general strike that led to the grant of the constitution.<sup>215</sup> England checked Russian proposals to act aggressively against the constitution, both before the June

<sup>210</sup> Pavlovitch, "La situation agraire," 622; Keddie, *Historical Obstacles to Agrarian Change*, 8, based on a British report of 1909; Milani, "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution," 135.

<sup>211</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 299 note 1, 240.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 300, based on Kirmani, *Tarikh-i Bidari-yi Iranian*, II, 119.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>214</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 99, 99 note 111, based on I. Amir-Khizi, *Qiyam-i Azarbaijan va Sattar Khan* [The Revolt of Azarbaijan and Sattar Khan], 2 volumes (Tehran: Shafaq Press, 1960), 169; Ahmad Kasravi, *Zindigani-yi Man* [My Life] (Tehran, 1946), 32-33; and M. Baqir-Vajiah, *Balva-yi Tabriz* [The Tabriz Turbulence] (Tehran, 1977), 77. See also Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 60.

<sup>215</sup> This decision seems to have been taken unilaterally by the British chargé d'affaires at Tehran, as Wright notes that Sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary, disapproved of it: *The Persians Amongst the English*, xviii.

1908 coup and again in December 1911 to prevent the restoration of the ex-shah. From July 1908 to May 1909 England tried vainly to force reforms on Muhammad 'Ali, but by June 1909 was issuing warnings to the constitutionalist armies not to seize Tehran by force.<sup>216</sup> Whenever the revolution turned in a more radical direction British support and "neutrality" melted away and no objections were registered to aggressive Russian interventions. Browne suggests that many Iranians felt

... that Great Britain's real object was to prevent the spread of Constitutional ideas in Asia, for fear of the influence they might exert on India and Egypt; to keep Persia weak and distracted; and to maintain in their present deserted and depopulated condition those provinces of Persia (Kirmán and Sístán) which lay nearest to her Indian frontier.<sup>217</sup>

The material interests of Britain in Iran itself—its trade relations, the valuable (after 1908) southern oil fields, the loans—were definitively protected by the 1907 Agreement, a sort of "historic compromise" in Asia, in which Britain sought to safeguard its imperial possessions in India in exchange for allowing Russia a freer hand in northern Iran, the main locus of the revolution. With this document England signalled the end of serious support for the Constitutional movement or opposition to Russia's counter-revolutionary plans.

Russia was plainly hostile throughout the constitutional movement, although its hands were tied during the crucial 1905-6 events by its problems internally and with Japan, and this contributed to the early success of the revolution, just as its massive intervention in 1911 basically sealed the failure of the movement. Russia's impact on the course of events rose with the 1907 coronation of Muhammad 'Ali, who owed its bank some 300,000 pounds sterling. Its diplomats supported his 1908 coup and tried to save him a year later, while Russian officers under Liakhov commanded the Iranian Cossack Brigade on which his rule depended.<sup>218</sup> Browne produces possible evidence of official Russian planning and support in the shah's 1908 disbanding of the majlis. The Russian

<sup>216</sup> Lambton, "Persian Political Societies," 65, 86-87; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 196 (but see 191 for less helpful action in 1911); Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 201, 294-95, 307, 309.

<sup>217</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 195.

<sup>218</sup> Afshari notes that "The Russian officers were employed by the Shah's government but communicated directly with the Russian Ministry of War": "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 224 note 2, based on B. H. Summer, *Tsardom and Imperialism in the Far East and Middle East, 1800-1914* (London, 1943), 52-53. Liakhov told the Cossack troops that set out for Tabriz in October 1908: "You must know that, should you return victorious, you will be overwhelmed with money and favors both on the part of the Russian and Persian sovereigns:" quoted in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 258, with emphasis in the original.

government formally denied that Liakhov acted with its "orders, knowledge or approval."<sup>219</sup> In April 1909 Russian troops intervened directly in the siege of Tabriz, and while their presence ended the starvation there and prevented the shah's tribal forces from sacking the bazaar, its occupation was generally in the favor and name of Muhammad 'Ali. The 1909 restoration of the constitution was as much an anti-Russian as an anti-shah movement, since Muhammad 'Ali was correctly perceived as a virtual Russian puppet (recall his remarks on vassalage above) and Russian troops were occupying Azarbaijan. After this the Russians quietly supported Muhammad 'Ali's military campaign to return to the throne in 1911; there was allegedly an agreement whereby in case of success he would have ceded the rich territories of Azarbaijan and the Caspian coast to Russia.<sup>220</sup> When this failed, as well as the Bakhtiari-led coup that was rumored to be planned for late November, the Russians used diplomacy and armed forces to bring about the dismissal of the reformer Shuster, the dissolution of the majlis and the end of the revolution.<sup>221</sup>

### III.C. Organizations, Ideologies, Popular Culture

In drawing the above observations together, we discover 1) a constitutionalist alliance (artisans, intelligentsia, workers, and some merchants, ulama and marginal urban classes), 2) the royalist social base (the court and its retainers, and some of the ulama, tribes and marginalized urban classes), 3) the uninvolved peasant and tribal masses, and 4) interventionist foreign powers. The form and content of their struggle is brought out more clearly by brief considerations of the organizations, ideologies and popular culture that were created and brought into play. Here we shall find keys to the tentative alliances that formed and coalesced, or ultimately failed to do so in the all-important struggle for the hearts and minds of the ulama, artisans, merchants and marginal urban classes.

<sup>219</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 221-25. Browne speculates that owing to the various factions in the Russian government, it is possible that Liakhov acted without the knowledge of the foreign minister Izvolsky (who denied knowing) but with "incitements and encouragements" "from high quarters": *ibid.*, 227. On these factions, see *ibid.*, 263, 341.

<sup>220</sup> Browne, "Chronology," 330.

<sup>221</sup> The data on which this paragraph is based generally is found in McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 135-196; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 149, 170 note 1, 201, 209-10, 251, 272-87, 294, 297, 306-9, 319-22, 325, 341, 349; *idem*, *The Persian Crisis of December, 1911*.

**Organizations.** The period of the Constitutional Revolution witnessed the proliferation of a variety of organizations which had not existed before in Iranian society. The most significant of these were the anjumans, trade unions, early political parties and the armed units of the mujahidin. Of these, the trade unions have already been discussed above in the section on workers, and in Chapter Four's analysis of the working class.

The term "anjuman" means association, society, club or council. Groups of concerned individuals had begun to meet as early as the 1890s in secret societies whose purpose was to discuss the political and social problems of Iran and in some cases disseminate "enlightenment" ideas on the rule of law, equality, democracy, etc. The constitution provided for the formation of municipal councils to supervise elections, collect taxes and advise or oversee local administrators; article 92 vaguely stipulated that "The provincial and departmental councils are free to exercise complete supervision over all reforms connected with the public interest..."<sup>222</sup> Such local anjumans were formed at Tabriz, Shiraz, Isfahan, Rasht, Qazvin, Kirmanshah, Bushire, Hamadan, Kirman, Mashhad and elsewhere. In addition to these "official" anjumans, popular societies continued to form all over the country, especially in Tehran, with over 100 such bodies, the largest of which, the Society of Azarbaijanis, contained almost three thousand members.<sup>223</sup> These consisted of "clubs or societies of persons having some common interest, local, political, philanthropic, or other";<sup>224</sup> they could be organized by district, city of origin, and ethnic or religious background, as well as by profession. There were some 70 guild-based anjumans, while there were also anjumans composed primarily of merchants, or of religious students. Some anjumans provided welfare services for the sick and poor, and organized night classes "for the education of the humblest classes in the duties of citizenship and patriotism."<sup>225</sup> Political orientations varied widely as well: at Isfahan and Mashhad the anjumans were mostly controlled by conservative ulama, while some of those at Rasht and in Azarbaijan

<sup>222</sup> In Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 383.

<sup>223</sup> Lambton, "Persian Political Societies," 47; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 87. Afshari says Tehran had 200 anjumans, Kasravi that there were 180 in all Iran in 1906-7; Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 218; Kasravi, cited by Milani, "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution," 135.

<sup>224</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 244.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

had ties with the Social Democratic Party of Baku.<sup>226</sup> Lambton feels that the anjumans played less of a role after 1909, as the intellectuals in their ranks joined the political parties inside and outside the second majlis, while most of their members from the religious, merchant and guild communities lacked a common purpose.<sup>227</sup> Afshari argues that even the best among them lacked experience, organization and ideology: "the great majority of their members—mostly from the *pishevaran*—were constitutionalists only by revolutionary instinct (common among the *pishevaran* for centuries) without having attained any clarity on principles."<sup>228</sup>

Exceptions to this included such groups as the Revolutionary Committee, the Secret Society and the Tabriz provincial anjuman with its core known as the Secret Center. The Revolutionary Committee (Komiteh-i Inqilabi) was formed in May 1904 at Tehran by the popular preacher Malik al-Mutakallimin, and consisted of 57 progressive intellectuals associated with the National Library, aiming at the "overthrow of despotism" and establishing "the rule of law and justice." Among its members was the preacher Sayyid Jamal al-Din Isfahani, the advocate of modern education Daulatabadi, Sardar As'ad, the liberal chief of the Bakhtiari tribe, and Sulaiman Mirza Iskandari, later active in socialist politics.<sup>229</sup> The Secret Society (Anjuman-i Makhfi) drew its membership from the traditional religious and bazaar classes rather than the intelligentsia. Founded in 1905, it sought a variety of reforms in land registration, tax structure, the army, customs and a House of Justice which would implement the Shari'a; its program "ended with the declaration that if the government accepted these proposals Iran would surpass within one generation the achievements of even Japan."<sup>230</sup> The Secret Society was influential early in the revolution through its contacts with Bihbihani and Tabatabai, the two clerical leaders. The Secret Center (Markaz-i Ghaybi) was formed by twelve "young radicals" among whom were merchants, artisans and intellectuals. It had close ties with the Social Democratic Party of Iran whose program it distributed.<sup>231</sup> The Secret Center constituted the radical

<sup>226</sup> Lambton, "Persian Political Societies," 48-51; Mehrain, "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 177-78.

<sup>227</sup> Lambton, "Persian Political Societies," 88.

<sup>228</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 218-19.

<sup>229</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 78-79; *idem*, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution," 403.

<sup>230</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 79-80.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-76, 97.

wing of the larger Tabriz provincial or "national" anjuman, which administered the city during the resistance to the 1908 coup and the ensuing blockade. Consisting of merchants, artisans, ulama and intellectuals this anjuman assumed responsibility for defense and internal security, ran the schools, put out a newspaper, repaired the bazaar, established contact with the foreign consulates and operated bakeries that provided bread for the armed volunteers and their families.<sup>232</sup>

A second type of organization related in some cases to the anjuman movement was the armed volunteer units known as the mujahidin (literally, "those who strive for jihad"). Their first major action was the defense of the majlis building in December 1907 which was conducted by armed members of the Tehran anjumans. They continued to drill and organize in the spring of 1908 as tension mounted.<sup>233</sup> When the resistance shifted to Tabriz after the June coup, the ranks of the mujahidin, led by Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan, swelled with "the poorest and most downtrodden elements of the *pishevaran* population."<sup>234</sup> These artisans and small tradesfolk were organized in units of 20 to 25, under a commander, and expressly ordered not to extort a penny from anyone. Social democrats in the Caucasus also sent one hundred volunteers to Tabriz.<sup>235</sup> These units fought with considerable élan and achieved conspicuous successes against the shah's forces before succumbing to the starvation induced by the long blockade of the city. Mujahidin forces then spearheaded the nationalist army that took Rasht, placed itself under the Sipahdar, and together with the Bakhtiari restored the constitution in July 1909. Unfortunately, in one of the more confusing episodes of the revolution, disaffected units of Sattar Khan's Tabriz Revolutionary Army refused to disband thereafter, and had to be forcibly disarmed in August 1910 by the Tehran police, now headed by Yifrim Khan, a former officer in the Rasht volunteers.<sup>236</sup> Thereafter the defense of the revolution fell largely to the government's own troops, some of whom undoubtedly had been incorporated from the mujahidin units, and while these successfully contained the ex-shah's tribal forces in 1911 they were not able to

<sup>232</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 214, 231-33.

<sup>233</sup> Lambton, "Persian Political Societies," 60-70. McDaniel judges that by April 1908 "practically all authority had passed to the *anjumans*:" *The Shuster Mission*, 78.

<sup>234</sup> Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 235-36.

<sup>235</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 97.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 107; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 111-12.

withstand the Russian occupation. Without the efforts of the mujahidin and *fida'is* ('those who sacrifice themselves') however, the revolution would have ended in 1908 with Muhammad 'Ali as shah.

The final set of new institutions that appeared in Iran in this period were its first political parties, in most cases loose associations of individuals in the second majlis, but also somewhat more organized extra-parliamentary groups such as the social democrats. The first step in the origins of social democracy in Iran was the 1904 founding by emigré intellectuals from Iranian Azarbaijan of Himmat ('Endeavor') at Baku to organize Muslim workers in Russia. Its impact was limited, but not negligible, according to a police report:

[Himmat] does not include politically conscious workers; however, the mass of Tatars, Lezghians, and Persians listen to the voice of the organization.... It issues tracts. It is headed by energetic individuals who, although lacking in erudition, are possessed of strong revolutionary temperaments that produce an effect on the masses.<sup>237</sup>

Himmat concentrated less on strict organization and doctrine than on providing a loose network of radicals engaged in educational and journalistic activities. In 1904 or 1905 socialists organized the Ijtimayun-i 'Amiyun-i Iran ('Social Democracy of Iran'), also in the Caucasus. Its founders tried unsuccessfully at first to organize in the religious environment of Mashhad, then with more success established the first Social Democratic cell in Tehran within the Society of Azarbaijanis. The Tabriz Social Democrats, starting with thirty members, organized in the bazaar districts, among the Armenians (who had their own socialist Dashnak party), and in the tannery there. A Jami'yat-i Mujahidin ('Association of Fighters') was formed around 1908 by Azari speakers in Mashhad, who affiliated with the Baku Social Democrats and published the first socialist program in Iran, calling for armed defense of the constitution, social justice and "eventual equality," universal suffrage, free schools and hospitals, proportional representation for the provinces in the majlis, sale of royal land and "excess" estates to landless peasants, and an eight hour working day, among other demands.<sup>238</sup> Eventually there were said to be social democratic branches in Tabriz, Mashhad, Tehran, Khoi,

<sup>237</sup> Quoted in Swietochowski, *Russian Azarhaijan, 1905-1920*, 53.

<sup>238</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 87, 97 note 105, 99-100. The program of the Iranian Social Democratic Party, of ca. 1904, is discussed in Abrahamian, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution," 402.

Isfahan and Anzali/Rasht.<sup>239</sup> Meanwhile repression in Russia in 1907 destroyed most of Himmat's organizations and a number of Iranian and Russian Azarbaijanis moved to northern Iran to work for the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>240</sup> Kasravi says that activists known as the Caucasus Mujahidin took leading roles in Tabriz where most people accepted them though some ulama called them atheists.<sup>241</sup> After 1909 the Social Democrats of Baku ordered their members to dissolve their branches in Iran and join the new Democrat Party.<sup>242</sup> It is difficult to judge the overall impact of these early socialists on the Constitutional Revolution; as Lambton and Floor argue, it was not major,<sup>243</sup> but neither was it insignificant in that they inaugurated the propagation of socialist ideas and groups in Iran.

Other parties eventually emerged from within the majlis. The first majlis (1906-08) had been elected along occupational and status lines, as follows: ulama (29.2 percent), government officials/notable (22.3 percent), guildspeople (18.0 percent), merchants (17.4 percent) and princes (5.0 percent).<sup>244</sup> As it defined the major issues facing it, royalist, moderate and progressive wings took shape, mostly personalized associations with loose organization and no real ideology. The royalists were few in number and unpopular, tending to stay away from the sessions; they included some of the princes and landowners. The ulama, led by Bihbihani and Tabatabai, for the most part supported the moderates (whom Browne calls the Clerical Party), as did most of the merchants, officials and guildspeople. The Azarbaijani delegates, led by Taqizadeh, were the most radical, and drew on the intelligentsia, supported by some of the Tehran guilds and merchants. The moderates had by far the majority, but the 20 or 21 progressive delegates (out of 160) had influence beyond their numbers.<sup>245</sup> In 1907 and 1908 there was a great deal of cooperation: the progressives knew they needed the influence of the ulama and bazaar classes, while the latter were compelled to follow the popular movement. By early 1908 however the three factions were mutually hostile and the effectiveness of the majlis ground to a halt as Muhammad 'Ali prepared his coup and the popular initiative was taken

<sup>239</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 5.

<sup>240</sup> Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920*, 68.

<sup>241</sup> Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 194-95.

<sup>242</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 105.

<sup>243</sup> Lambton, "The Persian Constitutional Revolution," 177; Floor, *Labour Unions*, 4, 9.

<sup>244</sup> Ashraf, *Mavane'-i Tarikhii*, 119 table 4.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 121; Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 140, 146; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 88.

by the anjumans.

The second majlis (1909-11) was more conservative in social composition: Mehrain has it as 83 percent landowners, Qajar landed bureaucrats and tribal chiefs, 12 percent ulama and bazaar classes, and 5 percent intelligentsia.<sup>246</sup> The guilds almost disappeared when the 32 seats reserved for them in Tehran alone (out of 60) were reduced to 15 seats for *all* the Tehran delegates. This time two parties emerged, more formally than in the first majlis. The Moderate Party (Firqah-i 'Itidal) generally got two-thirds of the votes or more, while the Democrat Party (Firqah-i Demokrat) were the minority. The smaller Democrat Party had 27 delegates and these included eight civil servants, five journalists, five ulama, one doctor and one landowner. These men had connections with the Tabriz Secret Center, the Revolutionary Committee and Malkam Khan's Society of Humanity, while outside the majlis Democrats had ties with the social democrats and other radicals. Their program emphasized equality before the law, separation of religion and politics, free education with emphasis on women, progressive taxation, land distribution, industrialization and a ten hour limit on the working day. Articles in their paper *Iran-i No* (New Iran) identified the enemies as oriental despotism, the feudal ruling class and Western imperialism. Shuster worked closely with 10 to 15 of their number.<sup>247</sup> The Moderate Party was led by Bihbihani, Tabatabai, the Sipahdar and a constitutionalist Qajar prince of the Farmanfarma family, and its 53 deputies included 13 ulama, ten landlords, ten civil servants, nine merchants and three tribal chiefs. Its program reflected these more conservative social bases, calling for strengthening constitutional monarchy, upholding the shari'a, protecting family life and private property, assisting the middle class in the bazaar, "instilling "a cooperative attitude" among the masses through religious education... and defending society against the "terrorism" of the anarchists, the "atheism" of the Democrats, and the "materialism" of the Marxists."<sup>248</sup> It acquired to some extent a popular base in the bazaar, a fact which portended a key shift in the political sympathies of the bazaar merchants and artisans. The fact that the Moderates had a clear

<sup>246</sup> Mehrain, "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 192.

<sup>247</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 103-5; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 10; McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission*, 173.

<sup>248</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 106, 105, citing the program of the Moderate Party.

majority in the second majlis undoubtedly slowed down the momentum of the revolution, and ultimately limited the resistance of the majlis to the Russian ultimatum of 1911.

**Ideologies.** Ideological developments took two primary forms in the Constitutional Revolution—secular and religious, with some overlap in themes, but in the end rather more serious divergences in conception and aims. The intelligentsia, as we have defined it, was the natural originator of secular ideas, including those of a majlis and constitution. Milani, who has tried to characterize the core principles of the new ideologies, lists the need for law, a call for equality, the rights of the individual, freedom of trade and commerce, and a modern, critical education based on scientific, religious and literary enlightenment. These ideas were worked out in the late nineteenth century by writers and journalists such as Akhundzadeh, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Taliboff, Maragha'i, Malkam Khan, Dihkhuda, Muntashar al-Daula and others.<sup>249</sup> The works of these authors were widely read in the anjumans and constitutionalist circles. Malkam Khan's *Qanun* had called for a parliament with elected leaders as early as the 1890s. Malkam wanted a secular set of laws but realized the strategic need for an alliance with the ulama and left the impression that he was calling for Islamic law.<sup>250</sup> The underlying problem being addressed was arbitrary authority, and an interesting twist on the traditional "Mirror for Princes" literature was the interjection of *qanun* into its equations: "The new formula read as follows: The power of the state (*dūlat*) depends on the prosperity of subjects (*ra'iyat*); the prosperity of *ra'iyat* depends on justice; and there is no justice without *qānūn*—law which could be equally applied to all."<sup>251</sup> *Mashruteh*, the term that came to be translated as "constitutional," meant "conditioned," "constrained" or "confined"; the reference was to the monarchy.<sup>252</sup> By 1905 these aspirations had grown into the demand for a House of Justice, and then in 1906 into a National Assembly and a Constitution, the two great demands of the intelligentsia that were achieved in the early part of the revolution. The call for equality was

<sup>249</sup> Milani, "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution," 142-72; also Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 45-47; Keddie, *Roots of Rebellion*, 71-72. The works of Feridun Adamiyat in Persian, which I have not yet consulted, are rich sources for this whole topic.

<sup>250</sup> Algar, lecture on the Constitutional Revolution, University of California, Berkeley, February 22, 1982; *idem*, *Mīrzā Malkam Khān*.

<sup>251</sup> Afshari, "The *Pīshivarān* and Merchants," 150, with a reference to *Akhtar*, number 11 (September 4, 1895).

<sup>252</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 56.

logically an element of this, taking several forms—equality among all subjects (and the equality this implied among the religious communities), and in some cases calls for equality between the sexes.<sup>253</sup> Equality among male subjects was ultimately enshrined in the constitution, to the displeasure of some of the ulama. It represented a victory for the merchants and artisans of the bazaar as well as ordinary civil servants against the landowning and bureaucratic elites that had dominated Iranian politics till then.

Other core values addressed the need to extricate Iran from its political and economic dependence on the West (though somewhat paradoxically by making use of Western *ideas*). Thus Akhundzadeh stated that the central concern of his work was “the protection of *vatan* [the fatherland] from foreign encroachment.”<sup>254</sup> *Habl al-Matin*’s views on the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement express the same sentiment:

Are the United States of America or Japan likely to come from the Far West or the Far East respectively, that there should be any need for such an Agreement? It is clear that the danger which threatens Persia is precisely from these two Powers [i.e. Russia and England], and that, if they had no sinister designs, there would have been no need for any Agreement or Convention.<sup>255</sup>

In January 1906 after the second *bast*, the cry “Long Live the Iranian Nation!” was heard for the first time.<sup>256</sup> Nationalism meant the simultaneous assertion of Iran’s rights vis-a-vis the West, and the people’s rights vis-a-vis the state. Another area where nationalism connected foreign and internal problems was in the demand for “free trade” in Iran, associated with ideas of equality and progress.<sup>257</sup> The development of Iran’s own productive forces would strike a blow against foreign domination and provide opportunities for its merchants, craftspeople and workers. This linked a

<sup>253</sup> Milani identifies the advocacy of women’s rights in the works of Akhundzadeh, Malkam Khan, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Dihkhuda and the poet Lahuti: “Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution,” 161-63. Cf. the initiation oath of Malkam Khan’s Society of Humanity: “Equality in rights and duties is the only true foundation of human relations. Equality alone can create firm bonds of national solidarity. Equality alone can guarantee the individual his just rewards and obligations.” Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, based on F. Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Azad va Muqadimah-i Nazhat-i Mashrutiyyat-i Iran* [The Idea of Freedom and the Origin of the Iranian Constitutional Movement] (Tehran, 1961), 206-17.

<sup>254</sup> Milani, “Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution,” 144, citing Adamiyat, *Akhundzadeh* (Tehran, 1961), 117.

<sup>255</sup> *Habl al-Matin*, September 10, 1907, quoted by Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 180.

<sup>256</sup> Kirmani, *Tarikh-i Bidari-yi Iranian*, I, 364.

<sup>257</sup> Milani notes that references to free trade and commerce in the works of Afghani, Akhundzadeh, Maragha’i and Malkam Khan are “too numerous to be presented”: “Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution,” 166.

progressive section of the merchant class with the aspirations of those below it in the bazaar, albeit with somewhat blurred political implications. Finally, modern, secular education was espoused as a way to meet the challenge of the West. Malkam Khan wrote, "Our hopes are entirely upon science," while Maragha'i criticized Iran's lack of technical schools.<sup>258</sup> Akhundzadeh links education to free trade and economic development in his call for an engaged literature:

The most important task of literature is this: to actively propagate the cause of the progress of Iranian commerce and agriculture, of the exploration and exploitation of its mines, of the necessity to improve science and technology and establish schools.<sup>259</sup>

In some writers a corollary to the enlightenment ideal was criticism of "superstition," verging on anti-clericalism in Akhundzadeh, Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani and Dihkhuda. Even Afghani, who tried to reconcile Islam and modern science, blamed the ulama for "The ruin and corruption we have experienced."<sup>260</sup> This suggests one line of tension between secular and religious ideologies in the period.

Lambton notes that the self-understanding of participants in the Constitutional Revolution was less as "revolutionaries" than as "*āzādī-khwāhān* (liberals), *milliyūn* (nationalists) and *mashrūṭeh-khwāhān* (constitutionalists)."<sup>261</sup> A more radical secular trend however was embodied by the social democrats. The ideas articulated in the programs of the Baku Social Democrats, the Jami'yat-i Mujahidin in Mashhad, and the Democrat Party cited earlier went beyond the liberal freedoms of the mainstream secular intelligentsia to advocate land reform, an eight-hour day, progressive taxation and separation of religion and politics. The Democrats dropped references to socialism from their program but their paper *Iran-i No*, which had the largest circulation of Tehran's newspapers, informed Iranians about European socialism and the fundamentals of Marxism. It too however stressed secularization, constitutionalism, industrialization and national unity as keys to development, thus presenting essentially a radicalized version of the basic secular ideologies.<sup>262</sup>

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, citing Malkam Khan, *Majmu-i Asar-i Malkam Khan* [Collected Works of Malkam Khan] (Tehran, 1948), 79-90, and Maragha'i, *Siyahatnama-yi Ibrahim Beg*, 87, 104.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 171, apparently citing Adamiyat's *Akhundzadeh*, 257.

<sup>260</sup> See Milani, "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution," 170, 169.

<sup>261</sup> Lambton, "The Persian Constitutional Revolution," 175.

<sup>262</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 99-105. In Browne's opinion *Iran-i No* was "the greatest, the most important and the best known of all the Persian newspapers, and the first to appear in the large size usual in

This suggests that one of the principal vehicles for conveying these ideas was the newspapers which sprang up during the revolution. Some ninety new journals appeared in 1906 and 1907. Their names alone hint at the tenor of the times: *Taraqi* (Progress), *Ittihad* (Unity), *Bidari* (Awakening), *Adamiyat* (Humanity), *Umid* (Hope), *‘Asr-i Jadid* (The New Age), *Azad* (Free), *Mujahid* (Freedom Fighter), *Huquq* (Rights), *‘Adalat* (Justice), *Musavat* (Equality), and *Nida-yi Vatan* (Voice of the Fatherland), among others. Browne, an expert on these papers, judges that whereas before the revolution the papers published in Iran were “worthless;” during it, “At its best the free Persian press reached a very high level, and at its worst it was superior to certain English, French and American papers.”<sup>263</sup> The press was shut down by Muhammad ‘Ali after his 1908 coup, but reappeared when he was deposed in 1909. One theme sounded in some of these newspapers that heralded ideological divisions was anti-clericalism;<sup>264</sup> as we shall see various ideological currents existed among the ulama. Certain other aspects of the role of Iran’s press in this period will be treated in the section on popular culture below.

Ideological development within a religious framework was split on the issues raised by the revolution, just as the ulama themselves were. The constitutionalist mujtahids of Iran and the ‘atabat cities in Iraq agitated against the tyranny of the shah as well as his reliance on outside powers. There was a different emphasis here than with the secular ideologists who opposed the same evils, for they were filtered through fundamentally different views of the world: “arbitrary rule” was seen in terms of the shah’s authority versus that of the mujtahids and the state’s law versus the shari’a, while foreign interference was a question of infidels in the abode of Islam rather than imperialism per se. In the early stages of the revolution however there was a marked congruence between secular and religious ideologies in support of constitutionalism. The popular preacher who touched off the 1906 basts was arrested for a speech in which he said “All this backwardness is due to the autocracy and to injustice and to the wants of laws.”<sup>265</sup> Most of the ulama saw the events of 1905-6 as an

Europe:” *The Press and Poetry*, 52.

<sup>263</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 128, 143 note 1. Tehran had 148 newspapers over this period, Tabriz 51, Rasht 25, Isfahan 20 and Mashhad 10: Browne, *The Press and Poetry*, 26.

<sup>264</sup> See the summaries of anti-clerical articles published in *Sur-i Isrāfi* on February 13, 1907 and *Habl al-Matin* on August 1, 1907 in Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 93.

<sup>265</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 83, citing a British Foreign Office “Translation of the Contr-

attempt to enforce the Islamic shari'a.<sup>266</sup> The second article of the Supplementary Fundamental Laws stated that legislation must be in accord with Islam, and a committee of at least five mujtahids was to determine whether it was, a clause which though never implemented, was more or less satisfactory to the pro-constitutional ulama.<sup>267</sup> Mirza Husain Na'ini wrote a treatise in support of constitutionalism, arguing that legitimate rule belongs exclusively to the Hidden Imam; otherwise there are degrees of legitimacy among which tyrannical monarchy is low on the list and that it is better to circumscribe the shah's rule by a body of elected representatives who ensure the observation of Islamic law.<sup>268</sup> But Na'ini was not prominent and his treatise was little known. In Adamiyat's view, "the religious institution did not have a modern progressive political philosophy, and did not produce valid political works until after the formation of the constitutionalist movement."<sup>269</sup> The progressive ulama felt that constitutionalism is permitted by Islam, issuing a circular letter in 1909 or 1910 calling on the people to defend the majlis and the ideas of freedom and justice.<sup>270</sup> Arjomand acknowledges that a number of political tracts were written justifying parliamentary democracy but finds that

... clerical writings were flawed by a number of important misconceptions regarding the nature and underlying principles of parliamentary democracy. The serious secularizing implications of legislation were played down, and a number of flat contradictions between Islamic and liberal political concepts were ignored. Therefore these tracts were not to serve as the basis for a modernized Shi'ite political ethic once these implications became clear. The pro-Constitution jurists soon found themselves on the defensive.<sup>271</sup>

These weaknesses opened the door for the elaboration of a second type of religious ideology.

Opposed to these conceptions were those ulama Arjomand has termed the "traditionalist," anti-parliamentary ulama. led by Nuri in Tehran and Sayyid Kazim Yazdi in the 'atabat. Nuri considered the proposed constitution *bid'at*—a "reprehensible innovation," actually opposed to Islam.

oversial Speech" (1907).

<sup>266</sup> Algar, *Religion and State*, 253-54.

<sup>267</sup> Article two is found in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 372-73.

<sup>268</sup> Na'ini's views as summarized by Hamid Algar, lecture on the Constitutional Revolution, University of California, Berkeley, February 22, 1982.

<sup>270</sup> F. Adamiyat, *Idiolozi-yi Nahzat-i Mashrutiyyat-i Iran* [The Ideology of the Iranian Constitutional Movement] (Tehran: Payam Press, 1976), 3, quoted by Arjomand, "Review Article: Religion and Ideology in the Constitutional Revolution," 284.

<sup>271</sup> Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*, 267.

Nuri's objections to the meaning and content of constitutionalism as it emerged in the revolution were several:

... 'the inauguration of the customs and practices of the realms of infidelity', the intention to tamper with the Sacred Law which is said to belong to 1300 years ago and not to be in accordance with the requirements of the modern age, the ridiculing of the Moslems and insults directed at the *'ulama*, the equal rights of nationalities and religions, spread of prostitution, and the freedom of the press which is 'contrary to our Sacred Law'.<sup>272</sup>

Though it had been proposed by him, the second clause of the Fundamental Supplementary Laws did not satisfy Nuri. He considered the constitution a direct threat to Islamic law and the privileged position of the Muslim community in Iran. The majlis, said to be led by atheists, freethinkers and Babis, was deemed by Nuri a group of supporters of the West, beguiling "the masses who are more benighted than cattle."<sup>273</sup> Nuri's alternative was variously a *mashruteh-i mashru'a*—a constitution in accordance with the shari'a—or, once Muhammad 'Ali had successfully disbanded the majli, the position that the government should be *mashru'a* and that constitutionalism itself was contrary to Islam.<sup>274</sup> Nevertheless he had no specific, comprehensive blueprint for an Islamic political system. Moreover the result of the shift in thinking he tried to effect was away from an anti-autocracy position toward an anti-Western ideology only. By 1907-8 he was explicitly supporting the reactionary Muhammad 'Ali and what was in effect traditional despotic monarchy with some imprecise checks and balances imposed by ulama who agreed with him. After Nuri's death the ulama moved toward a more centrist position from both sides of the ideological divide. The Moderate Party called for the safeguarding of religion as "the best bulwark against oppression and injustice," and still held the Democrats to be radicals and atheists, while even the pro-constitutional ulama became more concerned to protect the judicial prerogatives of the ulama and supervise the religious orthodoxy of the press.<sup>275</sup> Nuri's positions had failed to pull the ulama as a whole into the opposition but they had undercut their strongly constitutionalist sentiments of 1905-6. They also had an impact on the religiously-minded masses of the bazaar, causing a muting of the mobilization of some key groups—

<sup>272</sup> Said Amir Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth-century Iran," pp. 195-232 in Said Amir Arjomand, editor, *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 201, quoting Nuri's published open letters known as his journal (*ruznama*).

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> These two conceptions can be found in *ibid.*, 202, and *idem*, "The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition," 183.

merchants, artisans and lesser ulama.

**Political culture.** The available evidence on the political consciousness and cultures of the participants in the Constitutional Revolution strengthens our theses on its mass, popular social bases. Religious imagery played a definite role in mobilizing the masses. Abrahamian argues that, "At times of crisis, the public moved into action not with images of Cromwell, Robespierre, Voltaire, Tennis Courts, and besieged Bastilles, but with traditional concepts of social justice and emotional symbols derived from the Shi'i heritage—especially from the martyrdom of Hussein and his family."<sup>276</sup> Browne's eyewitness at the Legation bast wrote him:

Perhaps the scene was most picturesque at night. Nearly every tent used to have a *rawza-khwān*, and it was really an admirable tableau, these tents with their circles of listeners and the *rawza-khwān* at one end, relating the old, old stories of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.<sup>277</sup>

When the royalists were besieging Tabriz in 1909, the mujtahids of Najaf considered the blockade "tantamount to denying the water of the Euphrates to the companions of the Lord of Martyrs [Imam Ḥusayn]."<sup>278</sup> Shi'i appeals to martyrdom and revolt were effective in inspiring the mujahidin to fight the shah's armies and the fida'is to assassinate leading conservative figures, meeting a sure death in the process. It is true that these motivations were somewhat undermined later in the revolution by the work of the ulama; Malikzadeh noted "the clergy ... fooled the public, especially craftsmen and tradesmen, into believing that the Democrats were the sworn enemies of Islam."<sup>279</sup> Katouzian describes one large street procession in which the slogan was "We support the Prophet's religion, *Mashrūteh* we do not want."<sup>280</sup>

Anti-authoritarian attitudes and resistance to state power thrived in their own right. By May 1907 the British minister Sir Cecil Spring-Rice was reporting

<sup>275</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 106; Arjomand, "The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition," 186.

<sup>276</sup> Abrahamian, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution," 413. Lambton concurs that Islam was a more powerful ideology of mobilization than (Western) nationalism: "Persian Society under the Qājārs," 136.

<sup>277</sup> Quoted by Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 120.

<sup>278</sup> Kasravi, *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 729, translated by Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama," 233.

<sup>279</sup> M. Malikzadeh, *Tarikh-i Inqilab-i Mashrutiyyat-i Iran* [History of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution], 5 volumes (Tehran: Suqrat Press, 1949), IV, 212, translated in Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 106.

<sup>280</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 59.

One after another, unpopular Governors have been expelled... A spirit of resistance to oppression and even to all authority is spreading throughout the country.... The sentiment of independence in the widest sense, of nationality, of the right to resist oppression and to manage their own affairs is rapidly growing among the people. It is strongest in Azerbaijan. It is very strong in the capital.<sup>281</sup>

Popular attitudes toward the elite underwent a change too, as an Iranian correspondent told Browne:

A certain builder came to the house of a Minister to repair an iron fire-place. On entering, he saluted the Minister. The Minister's servant bade him do obeisance. He replied, 'Knave, do you not know that we now have a Constitution, and that under a Constitution obeisances no longer exist?' A strange independence and freedom are observable in the people, and it is impossible to say how this change in their character has been so suddenly effected.<sup>282</sup>

The shah himself was taken down off his pedestal in the popular imagination, as a revolutionary proclamation of late 1907 warned him not to forget

... that he was not born by his mother possessed of crown and signet-ring, nor does he hold in his hand a warrant of absolute sovereignty from the Unseen World of Spirits. Assuredly if he had but reflected for a moment that this sovereignty depends only in the acceptance or rejection of the People, and that those who have elected him to this high position and acknowledged him [as King] are able also to elect another [in his place], he would never have swerved aside to this extent from the straight Path of Justice and the requirements of constitutional monarchy.<sup>283</sup>

A common means of self-expression were the innumerable *shabnamas* ("night letters") that were posted anonymously; their themes constituted clarion calls against foreign intervention and domestic oppression.<sup>284</sup>

Certain aspects of the press should be mentioned in this context of popular consciousness as well. The paper of the Tabriz anjuman, *Ruznama-yi Milli* (Journal of the Nation), tried to reach the people of the bazaar, writing, "Because of the request of the citizens, the *kasabeh* (pishvaran) and the *asnaf* (guilds), simple and easy words are chosen."<sup>285</sup> The same pledge was forthcoming from the editor of the satirical journal *Mulla Nasr al-Din*, written in Turkish and published in Tiflis;

<sup>281</sup> Quoted by Lambton, "Persian Political Societies," 54-55.

<sup>282</sup> Letter from Browne's correspondent, December 29, 1906, in *The Persian Revolution*, 127.

<sup>283</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 169, quoting a revolutionary proclamation from one of the anjumans.

<sup>284</sup> Milani, "Ideology and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution," 149-50, cites Kirmani, *Tarikh-i Bidari-yi Iranian*, II, 8, 203-5, 208-13, 222-25, for examples of these. Kasravi criticizes the writers of these as boastful, but notes that there were hundreds of them: *Tarikh-i Mashruteh*, 122-23.

<sup>285</sup> Quoted in Afshari, "A Study of the Constitutional Revolution," 214 note 1. According to Muhammad 'Ali Khan "Tarbiyat" whose work on the Iranian press Browne presents, the constitutional papers *al-Jumal* (Beauty), *Chanta-i Pa-barahna* (The Beggar's Wallet) and *Sharafat* (Nobility) were written in popular, idiomatic language, sold inexpensively, and had positive effects on "the common people and villagers:" see Browne, *The Press and Poetry*, 23, 69-70, 72, 109.

illiterates could enjoy its many cartoons.<sup>286</sup> Browne's correspondent explained how the newspapers could reach even the large portion of the population that was illiterate:

Everyone seems to read a paper now. In many of the *Qahwa-khānas* (coffee-houses) professional readers are engaged, who, instead of reciting the legendary tales of the *Shāh-nāma*, now regale their clients with political news.<sup>287</sup>

The ballads and verses of nationalist poets such as Bahar, Ashraf Gilani, Lahuti, Sabir and others were also very popular in the cities; "Sabir's diatribes against despotism and attacks on the rich and powerful were recited at political meetings—and by the soldiers at the front line."<sup>288</sup> Dihkhuda excelled at political satire which also appealed enormously to the urban population. In all of these ways a political culture of opposition and resistance was elaborated and spread widely, at least in urban settings, during the revolution.

#### IV.D. The Causes and Outcome of the Constitutional Revolution

After reviewing the course of events of the Constitutional Revolution and assessing in some detail the logics of participation of the contending social forces, as well as the organizational, ideological and political cultural frameworks they fashioned, it is now time to address the underlying questions posed initially about the causes, nature and outcome of the revolution.

**The causes and outbreak of the Constitutional Revolution.** The developing debate over ideological versus economic factors in the outbreak of the revolution has been brought to a certain point by Abrahamian, who concludes that the earlier preoccupations of historians with the impact of Western ideas such as nationalism, constitutionalism and socialism as causes must be overturned, for "the socioeconomic impact of the West can be described as the major determining cause of the constitutional revolution."<sup>289</sup> My position is that, as in the case of the fall of the Safavids discussed in Part One of this dissertation, we again have an instance of *intertwined* economic, political and ideological crises in the Iranian social formation, now caused by *dependence*. A rereading of the first

<sup>286</sup> Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920*, 56, 57, 61.

<sup>287</sup> Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 143.

<sup>288</sup> Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920*, 67.

<sup>289</sup> Abrahamian, "The Causes of the Constitutional Revolution," 414.

paragraph of "The Course of Events" suggests some of these, as does reflection on the findings of Chapter Four and the analysis of social forces above. Most classes and groups in the Iranian social formation—and all of those in the constitutionalist alliance—had grievances as a result of a century of increasingly intense contact with the West.<sup>290</sup>

Thus, merchants had watched while their control of the export trade and some internal markets fell into Western hands; though a few large ones had enriched themselves through profitable collaboration with foreign companies or internal monopoly of a product, the vast majority of medium and small traders had lost much of their standing. Artisans had suffered the collapse of their livelihood in many sectors, especially the formerly central handicraft textile one, under a flood of European imports. The lower urban classes and working class labored (when they could) in a setting characterized by high prices for food and unemployment. Peasants saw their standard of living inexorably decline as cultivation shifted from food staples to export crops and rising land values enmeshed them in a cash-based relation to their landlords that increased their indebtedness. Tribespeople witnessed the circumscribing of their economic activity by the new value placed on urban and agricultural production, compounded by diminishing political-military roles in the nineteenth century and the ravages of natural disasters such as drought-induced famines. Two key groups—the ulama and the nascent intelligentsia—increasingly conceptualized these disasters as signs that Islam itself was in danger or that Iran was falling prey to a more economically powerful, industrialized West; in either case the Qajar state and foreign powers were perceived as the responsible parties. Dependence was an economic process but one that had far-reaching political consequences, and was experienced and filtered through the value systems and cultural beliefs present in Iranian society.

So many groups and classes had particular grievances that it was fairly easy to magnify a series of incidental confrontations in 1905-6 into a large mass movement opposed to the state. This was because the state was so clearly identifiable with the hated Qajar monarchy, whose legitimacy

<sup>290</sup> Nikki Keddie, in her various fine empirical pieces recognizes most of the factors I would identify, but doesn't have the concept of dependent development to unify them and as a result to explain the root causes of the phenomena she observes. See especially Nikki R. Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective," pp. 579-598 in *American Historical Review*, volume 88, number 3 (June 1983), 580-82.

had steadily eroded over the course of a century, from the defeats to Russia that provoked the Griboyedov massacre, to the failure of reform efforts from the 1830s to the 1880s, to the concession-mongering that touched off the Reuter concession agitation and the Tobacco Rebellion. The emperor retained only the barest shreds of clothing by the turn of the twentieth century. The crisis of the state was certainly political (weakness versus the West, repression and autocracy internally), economic (dependence on loans and foreign trade, loss of control over customs, etc.) and finally ideological (the mass perception that the state had failed to protect either the nation's interests or its Islamic identity).<sup>291</sup>

Finally, the world-system situation in 1905 was one of special opportunity for the embryonic revolutionary alliance. Russia, which had gained the upper hand in the long struggle with Britain for pre-eminent control in Iran's affairs, was just at that moment weakened and distracted by its own internal and other external crises (the 1905 revolution, the war with Japan). Britain, which had played this same role in 1890-92, could now side with the groups that might erode the Russians' supremacy—the merchants and progressive ulama—and moreover, possessed the added ideological cachet of being a constitutional state itself. Thus, while top British foreign policy makers such as Grey may have been nearly as imperialistic in Iran as Russia (though admittedly with an eye more on India than Iran's value to them per se), the man on the spot in Tehran, Grant Duff, offered the bastis asylum and support at the British Legation in the critical months of July and August 1906.

At that point, with the whole capital paralyzed by a general economic strike and the exodus of the religious authorities to Qum, the tiny Iranian intelligentsia scored one of its greatest victories by raising the stakes of the movement to demand a constitution and a national assembly. With 14,000

<sup>291</sup> Browne's judgement on the Qajar state in 1910 is interesting in this regard:

I do not myself believe that the demand for popular or constitutional government would have arisen at all, or at any rate in our time, if recent Shāhs of Persia had shewn themselves either moderately patriotic, or just, or far-sighted. Against a Shāh Isma'īl, an 'Abbās the Great, or a Karīm Khān the Persians would never have revolted. It was when they became convinced that their country was despised abroad, that their interests were betrayed for a vile price, and that their religion and their independent existence as a nation were alike threatened with destruction, that they began to demand a share in the government of their country.

*The Persian Revolution*, xix. At first sight this is a "personalist" explanation of the type that Lockhart advanced regarding the degeneracy of the later Safavid shahs, but in fact, it can also be read as a sensitive expression of the dialectic I have tried to capture between a Qajar state weakened by dependence on the West and the Iranian people's perception of this as a threat to their mental and material universes.

merchants and artisans opposed to it, with the ulama in symbolic defiance withdrawn from the scene, and with its own small army wavering in its support, the Qajar state caved in precipitously, and the revolution marked moments of triumph: the August 5, 1906 grant of an assembly and the December 30, 1906 signing of the Fundamental Law which the assembly produced in the fall. Iran was in transition from despotic state to constitutional monarchy.

**The outcome and nature of the revolution.** The Constitutional Revolution ultimately failed due to a double determination of the internal instability of its shifting alliances and the force brought to bear on it from external intervention. We see here the articulation of the complexities of the Iranian social formation and the dependence imposed on it within the world-system.

Our analysis of the social forces involved indicated the importance of the attempt to build a viable oppositional coalition and the shifting vicissitudes of the struggle for the hearts and minds of the major social classes. Splits in the alliance and key turning points in the revolution underline this process. From 1905 to early 1907 a working, if uneasy, coalition of intelligentsia, artisans, merchants and ulama united to confront the state. During the course of 1907 the drafting of the constitution and the exact definition of the relations between secular and religious laws and their respective spheres, breached this unity and led to Nuri's split within the ulama. Even if the majlis had been more unified, it still had to work with no control over certain institutions of the state (notably the monarch who still possessed the court, cabinet and a modicum of legitimacy) and had to face growing foreign pressure without an army or real control over the budget. Outside the majlis the anjuman movement maintained its opposition to the shah, but proved no match for the brutal coup of June 1908 carried out by the Cossack Brigade.

The year of Muhammad 'Ali Shah's restoration of autocracy during which the majlis was disbanded from June 1908 to July 1909 really set back the revolution. Although the resistance of Tabriz was courageous and new social forces with more radical ideas entered the fray, the restoration stalled all legislation passed from 1906 to 1908 from budget reforms to land and tax measures, and broke their momentum, forcing the second majlis to reconstitute itself and begin anew. The post-1909 period saw a sharpening of class conflict in some respects but a muting of it in others. The

state was now "constitutional" but conservative in its social bases, reflecting the tribal and landed elements that had combined to depose Muhammad 'Ali. In the provinces, old elites remained in place and tribal disruptions continued apace. The majlis was now controlled by a conservative majority of landowners, large merchants and ulama scared by the possibility of a more radical turn of events, while the continued support of the progressive ulama and the bazaar classes outside the majlis weakened somewhat due to all of these developments. This provided an opening for the Russians to step in and quash the attempted reforms that were still being proposed by the radical Democrats and Shuster. The Russian state had regained its equilibrium after the repression of its own internal opposition by 1907, coupled with its 1907 Agreement with England and the 1910 Potsdam Convention with Germany. The Russian army found willing collaborators in counter-revolution and repression in the Iranian cabinet, court, conservatives in the majlis, and landlords, large merchants and some ulama in the population at large.

The Constitutional Revolution ended then in a defeat, but it stands out as a revolutionary movement that attempted to change the balance of power and nature of Iranian society. Rather than a bourgeois revolution led by the merchant class, we have seen it as a multi-class populist revolution of artisans, progressive ulama, merchants, workers and lower classes. The institutions they created—majlis, constitution, anjumans, trade unions—were new in the history of Iran. The means they found to struggle for them—general strikes, mass demonstrations, basts, and when necessary armed defense of one's rights—were Iranian adaptations of the methods of modern social movements, and were conducted with determination, vigor and imagination. Failure came because the coalition that carried the revolution was a shifting one that could not hold itself together politically or ideologically, rooted in a complex class structure which had experienced the Western impact in divergent and not fully congruent ways. After both the constitutional alliance and the monarchy it opposed had exhausted themselves, the ultimate guarantors of Iran's dependence stepped in to preserve the system and suppress the popular movement.

## V. "Resolution from Above": World War I and Reza Khan's Rise to Power, 1914-1925

### V.A. Iran in World War I

The roots of the 1921 coup that eventually brought the Pahlavi dynasty to power in 1925 lie in the devastation caused by World War I and the unsettled state of the world-system, compounded by the demoralization of the Iranian opposition due to the reversal of the Constitutional Revolution. From 1911 to 1914 the northern portion of the country was dominated by Russia, the south by England. The two countries together tried to stabilize the counter-revolution, establishing internal security against the tribes, engaging in trade and maintaining control over politics. Russia had the most influence over the cabinet, while it vastly increased its trade until it was three times higher in 1914 than in 1900.<sup>292</sup> Gillard considers that "By 1914, northern Persia had for all practical purposes become part of the Russian Empire, occupied by Russian troops and with Russian consuls assuming governmental functions."<sup>293</sup> In the south the British worked with Shaikh Khaz'al, the Arab ruler of Khuzistan, to ensure their control over the newly producing oilfields. In May 1914 the British government attained controlling interest in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and sent troops which policed almost all of the "neutral zone" specified in the 1907 Agreement. The Iranian state itself was severely weakened in this situation (though it did not have to face the constitutional movement anymore); tribal leaders and large landlords became "virtually independent rulers in their own areas, and the situation became even worse than it had been in the preceding feudal era" [i.e. before 1906].<sup>294</sup>

Despite its declaration of neutrality, Iran became a battlefield for Turkish, Russian and British troops throughout World War I. The Ottomans moved troops into Azarbaijan in the fall of 1914 to oppose the Russians there, and captured Tabriz in early 1915. In Khuzistan and Iraq they were less successful against the British, but German agents such as Wassmuss played on anti-British

<sup>292</sup> Keddle, "The Impact of the West," 136.

<sup>293</sup> Gillard, *The Struggle for Asia*, 178.

<sup>294</sup> Bausani, *The Persians*, 176.

sentiments to stir up the tribes and others to harass the British at Bushire, and temporarily forced their consuls to abandon Kirmanshah, Hamadan, Isfahan, Yazd and Kirman in 1915. The third Iranian majlis, elected in the fall of 1914, proved less pliant than the British and Russians had expected. When the Russians attempted to dissolve it at Tehran in 1915, the leaders of the Democrat and Moderate parties set up a Committee of National Resistance first at Qum and then at Kirmanshah, where a Government of National Defense was declared, supported by Kurdish, Qashqai and Baluchi tribesmen who opposed the British with German-supplied arms. The central government under Ahmad Shah meanwhile looked on helplessly, running through 53 cabinets between 1906 and 1921.<sup>295</sup>

By 1916 however the British and Russians were regrouping themselves for the reassertion of their power in Iran. In March 1915 the two powers had signed a secret treaty which made no mention of Iranian independence, allowing for British control of the neutral zone (with its oilfields) in exchange for granting Russia "full liberty of action" in its sphere and postwar control of Istanbul and the Turkish straits. This seemingly implied the right for the Russians to annex northern Iran and for England to directly administer the south.<sup>296</sup> The British officer Sykes organized an 8,000 man Anglo-Indian-Iranian force in 1916 called the South Persia Rifles, which though never recognized by the government in Tehran, effectively policed the south. The government-in-exile at Kirmanshah collapsed the same year when the British took that city. The March and October 1917 revolutions in Russia dramatically altered the political landscape in Iran, leading to the evacuation of Russian troops from the north and the denunciation in 1918 by the new Soviet government of all Tsarist treaties and concessions concerning Iran. Though this removed at a single stroke the vise-like grip of the Russians on Iran's economy and polity that had been so relentlessly tightened from the mid-nineteenth century till World War I, its immediate effect was to leave all of Iran to the British, who

<sup>295</sup> This paragraph draws on Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 79-80; Denis Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians During the Qajar Period 1787-1921* (London: Heinemann, 1977), 171-74; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 111; and Mehrain, "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 207-8, 213.

<sup>296</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 79. When the new British consul to Mashhad passed through Petrograd in 1916 to take up his duties in Iran, he was told by the Russian Foreign Office official in charge of Iranian affairs, "as you no doubt know, we are going to partition [Iran]": Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Grey, "Recent Persian History," pp. 29-42 in *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, volume XIII, part I (1926), 31.

sent their troops into the north and began paying subsidies to the powerless Iranian government.<sup>297</sup>

The general economic impact of the war on Iran was devastating. In the agricultural sector, livestock and crops were appropriated by the contending armies, irrigation works fell into disarray, peasants were pressed into road-building and other military projects, villages were deserted. The pre-war level of agricultural production was still not regained by 1925.<sup>298</sup> Industrial development came to a standstill, though local trade and craft production survived. Inflation gripped the cities, imports outstripped exports (and both fell considerably in volume), and the trade dislocation led to depressed conditions in the north.<sup>299</sup> The height of suffering was reached in the winter of 1918-19 when severe famine struck due to the war's exhaustion of the surplus, compounded by problems of distribution and local hoarding. Estimates of death by starvation range from at least 100,000 to two million; the British financial adviser Balfour found that in the Tehran area "approximately a quarter of the agricultural population had died during the famine."<sup>300</sup> Thus did the Iranian people pay dearly for a war they had played no part in, waged by the European powers that dominated their country.

#### **V.B. From the War to the Coup: Social Movements and External Actors, 1918-21**

The period between the disaster of World War I and the coup of 1921 was one of increasing conflict between the state, internal social movements and foreign powers. No one of these forces could gain hegemony in Iran but each could thwart the others from reaching their goals, and this fundamental stalemate among the contenders prepared the ground for Reza Khan's assumption of power.

**Social Movements.** Powerful resistance movements to foreign occupation and the Qajar state emerged in Gilan (the celebrated and complex Jangali movement of religious radicals, nationalists

<sup>297</sup> This paragraph is based on Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 175-76; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 33; and for the Soviet and Iranian statements regarding Tsarist privileges, J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East. A Documentary Record: 1914-56* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1956), 34-36. Hereafter this source will be cited as *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, II.

<sup>298</sup> Keddie, *Historical Obstacles to Agrarian Change*, 10; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 17.

<sup>299</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 80; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 17; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 11; Issawi, *EHI*, 129.

<sup>300</sup> J. M. Balfour, *Recent Happenings in Persia* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922), 23. See also Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 81, and Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 17.

and socialists), Azarbaijan, Khurasan and elsewhere. The Jangali ("Forest") movement in the Caspian region was by far the most serious of these. Its origins have been traced back to anti-British and anti-Russian actions as early as 1913, but its real impetus came in the early years of the World War under the leadership of Mirza Kuchik Khan, a radical preacher and minor landlord who had fought in the Constitutional Revolution and been a member of the Moderate party in the second and third majlises. Fleeing to Gilan in 1915, he organized a guerrilla force called the Committee of Islamic Unity to harass the Russians in the north and oppose the corruption and weakness rampant in the central government. His movement was augmented in 1917 by the arrival of a Kurdish contingent from Kirmanshah under Khalu Qurban, and Tehrani Democrats led by the intellectual Ehsanallah Khan. Support came from diverse sources: merchants, ulama and landowners on the one hand, few of whom sought fundamental social change, and a large rank and file of Gilani peasants and mountaineers with a more radical bent, who fought for the abolishment of labor services, reform of the sharecropping arrangement and confiscation of the property of hostile landlords. These differences led to an ebb in the movement by mid-1919, due to splits and the occupation of northern Iran by the British and White Russians.<sup>301</sup>

The movement revived in the spring and summer of 1920 with an infusion of support from the Communist Party of Iran (CPI), newly formed in the wake of the arrival of Soviet forces at Anzali to clear out the remnants of British and Tsarist forces.<sup>302</sup> The CPI under Haidar Khan and the Jangalis of Kuchik Khan joined in establishing the Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, sending Lenin a message asking for "help in liberating us and all weak and oppressed nations from the yoke of Persian and English oppressors," and declaring the abolition of the monarchy in a note to Tehran.<sup>303</sup> The program of the new republic, with its emphasis on radical land reform and calls for the unveiling of

<sup>301</sup> This paragraph draws on Alexandre A. Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union. A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 79; Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921*, volume three, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 369; Kazemi and Abrahamian, "The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry," 285; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 112; Eric Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform Program on Rural Iran, 1962-1972," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University (1975), 67-68.

<sup>302</sup> On the origins of the CPI see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 113-16.

<sup>303</sup> Quoted in Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, 369.

women, soon alienated Kuchik Khan who held to the Islamic sanctity of private property and more conservative views. In late 1920 however negotiations resumed between Kuchik Khan and Haidar Khan, and despite a stalling of Soviet support, preparations were being made for a march on Tehran.<sup>304</sup>

A second serious movement sprang up in Azarbaijan under the leadership of Shaikh Muhammad Khiabani, who was simultaneously a religious leader, guildsman and social democrat. Around 1918 the Democrat Party in Azarbaijan convened and demanded from the central government land reforms, a trustworthy governor, and national and provincial assemblies. A further step toward secession was taken in 1919-20 with the renaming of the province Azadistan ('Land of Freedom'). By April 1920 the movement was in control of Tabriz, enacting price freezes to halt inflation, among other reforms. Unfortunately, unlike the Jangalis, it lacked military organizations, and in September 1920 the Cossacks who policed Tabriz revolted, killing Khiabani. Unrest persisted in Azarbaijan however even after the death of the leader.<sup>305</sup>

Several other regions and social sectors also posed threats to the central government. Autonomy movements occurred in Khurasan under Colonel Muhammad Taqi Khan Pesian and local Democrats; in Kirmanshah under Amir Afshar, a Democrat in alliance with local landed interests; and in several southern provinces, especially Khuzistan, ruled by Shaikh Khaz'al of Muhammarch.<sup>306</sup> Of the tribes generally, Wilber observes: "By 1921 practically every tribal group in Iran had reasserted its independence from central government control, although only one or two were in active rebellion."<sup>307</sup> In the urban centers moreover the union movement revived in 1917-18, with strikes and demonstrations by bakers and printers. The number of trade unions grew to ten by 1920, and there were said to be 20,000 unionized workers in Iran by late 1921, with 8,000 in Tehran. These included postal and telegraph workers, confectioners, shoemakers, tailors, lace-makers, teachers, civil

<sup>304</sup> See *ibid.*, 371-73; Kazemi and Abrahamian, "The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry," 286; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 85; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 116.

<sup>305</sup> On this movement, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 112-15, and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 83-85.

<sup>306</sup> On these movements, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 119; Mehraian, "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 235; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism*, 80-81.

<sup>307</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 19.

servants and workers in the textile, pharmaceutical, tobacco and construction industries. A Central Union Council, with informal ties to the new CPI and the Soviet Union met in late 1921, encompassing 16 unions and supported by the paper *Haqiqat* (Truth).<sup>308</sup> Taken together, by 1921 all these movements—the Jangalis, Azarbaijan, Khurasan, the tribal areas and the unions—posed a considerable threat to the survival of the central government.

**External actors and the state.** The counterweight to these social movements came less from the Iranian state than from the British. The British position in Iran threatened to become hegemonic with the change of government to the Soviets in Russia. Leon Trotsky, the Soviet commissar of foreign affairs, denounced the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention on January 14, 1918. A note from the Soviet government on June 26, 1918 annulled “once and for all these treaties and conventions which were violently extorted from Persia by the Russian Tsarist Government.” In compensation, the Soviets cancelled Iran’s debt to the Tsarist regime, renounced all claims on Iran’s customs, opened the Caspian to Iranian navigation, cancelled all governmental and private concessions, and gave Iran the Russian Bank and all Russian-built telegraph lines, roads, port installations and railways. The note ended with the wishes of the Russian people “for the throwing off of the exhausted shoulders of the Persian People the weight of the English and Allied Imperialists, who are bent on definitely crushing Persia, chained hands and feet.”<sup>309</sup> On July 27, 1918 the Iranian government decreed the abrogation of all its treaties, agreements and concessions with Tsarist Russia. The civil war in Russia changed the situation somewhat, as the Soviets became alarmed by the White Russian military threat from across the Caspian. Thus in May 1920 they landed at Anzali to seize the British- and Iranian-held former White Russian Caspian fleet, an act which involved them in the affairs of the Jangali movement.

British policy in Iran after 1918 was of two minds. The government wanted to reduce its military commitments in the Middle East, but Lord Curzon, the acting foreign secretary with great

<sup>308</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 12-16.

<sup>309</sup> “Denunciation of Tsarist Russian Privileges in Persia by the Soviet and Persian Governments” (June 26-July 27, 1918), pp. 34-36 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, II.

knowledge of Iran, "dreamt," in Nicholson's words, "of creating a chain of vassal states stretching from the Mediterranean to the Pamirs and protecting, not the Indian frontiers merely, but our communications with our further Empire.... In this chain of buffer states ... Persia was to him at once the weakest and most vital link."<sup>310</sup> The instrument for integrating Iran into this chain was the 1919 Agreement, by which Britain would provide, at Iran's expense "expert advisers ... for the several departments of the Persian Administration," especially officers and equipment to Iran's military. The Agreement went on to provide for a two million pound loan to Iran with the southern customs, and if necessary, *all* the customs, as a guarantee.<sup>311</sup> Secretly negotiated with Iranian cabinet ministers, who received an "advance" on the loan (in effect, a bribe), the Agreement was instantly unpopular in Iran. Despite the protests of the Iranian press, and public demonstrations against it as well as French, American and Soviet objections,<sup>312</sup> the British did not wait for its ratification (by the as yet unelected fourth majlis), but sent a mission to take over the Iranian administration, finances and military. The British forced a new tariff treaty on Iran in 1920, which made their imports even cheaper and brought Iran less revenue, while Russian imports were made more expensive. Vussuq al-Daula, the prime minister who had negotiated the 1919 Agreement, was forced to step down in June 1920; his successor Mushir al-Daula declared the Agreement suspended until all British and Russian troops had left the country, but he was forced out in the fall of 1920 in favor of the more pro-British Sipahdar, who had achieved so little during the Constitutional Revolution. The Sipahdar put British officers in charge of the Cossack Brigade, but though he wanted to, he could not bring the Agreement up for ratification in the majlis. The British continued to support the Iranian state with a

<sup>310</sup> H. Nicholson, *Curzon, the Last Phase* (London, 1934), 121-27, quoted in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, II, 64. Curzon had gone to the British cabinet's Eastern Committee on December 30, 1918 with a plan to make Iran a British Protectorate; the cabinet on the contrary wished to reduce British expenditure in Iran, which had reached 30 million pounds sterling in 1918: Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, 350-51; Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 179 note.

<sup>311</sup> "Agreements: Great Britain and Persia" (August 9, 1919), pp. 64-66 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, II. Iran's indebtedness to Britain stood at 5,590,000 pounds sterling by 1922: Issawi, *EHI*, 371.

<sup>312</sup> U.S. Secretary of State Colby's telegram to the American minister in Tehran of March 17, 1920 noted that "Department is concerned by the possibility that confirmation Anglo-Persian Agreement by Medjlis may make more difficult the obtaining of petroleum concessions by American companies:" Paine, "Persian Nationalism," 10, citing Foreign Relations of the U.S., 1920, III, 355. W. MacDonald, the American correspondent at the Versailles Peace Conference wrote that "the Agreement deceived nobody. The moment its terms were made public, everybody recognized that a virtual protectorate over Persia had been established and that the British Empire had in effect received another extension:" *The Nation*, September 13, 1919, quoted in Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 114.

subsidy of 225,000 pounds sterling a month, but had given up hopes of ratifying the Agreement, and were considering withdrawing their forces from Iran, though they were at a loss as to how to contain the Bolshevik threat and protect their valuable southern oilfields.<sup>313</sup>

By late 1920 and early 1921 then a situation of stalemate and crisis existed. The Gilan movement was seen as a possible military threat to Tehran, the shah was unable to form a cabinet, the British could not secure their Agreement, there was still no majlis, tribes were autonomous everywhere, the Cossack Brigade was in retreat from the Caspian, the economy was suffering from indebtedness, a balance of trade deficit and assorted other ills. The stalemate between the Iranian state, the British (and to a lesser extent, Soviets and Americans), and the several internal opposition movements, was by this point a highly unstable one.

#### V.C. Reza Khan's Rise to Power, 1921-25

**The coup.** It was in these unsettled circumstances that a hitherto rather obscure military officer named Reza Khan marched the Cossack Brigade from Qazvin to Tehran in February 1921 to seize the reigns of power. The most interesting question (and the most difficult to answer) about the coup d'état is the exact extent of the British role in it. While early observers and at least one standard history have discerned little or no British role in the coup, several key contemporary historians—Wilber, Keddie, Katouzian and Wright among them—have established that there was *some* British participation.<sup>314</sup> I would go further, and agree with the analyses of Ullman, and, most recently, Zirinsky that there was *significant* British involvement in the coup.<sup>315</sup> The available evidence suggests that while the Foreign Office in England had little or indeed nothing to do with the

<sup>313</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 81-85.

<sup>314</sup> Arguing for no real British involvement are Lt.-Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, "The Rise of Riza Khan Pahlavi," pp. 624-632 in *The National Review* (London), volume 86 (December 1925), 626; Balfour, *Recent Happenings in Persia*, 218; and Peter Avery, *Modern Iran* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1965), 228. Evidence of some British role is provided by Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 39ff; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 80; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 87; Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 180; and Grey, "Recent Persian History," 35.

<sup>315</sup> Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, 385; Michael P. Zirinsky, "Blood, Power, and Hypocrisy: The Murder of Robert Imbrie and American Relations with Pahlavi Iran, 1924," pp. 275-292 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 18, number 3 (August 1986), 280-81.

coup (it was in fact rather unclear about its policy toward Iran at this crucial juncture), leading British military and diplomatic personnel in Iran were instrumental in bringing it about.

Let us consider the following known facts. Reza Khan had risen through the ranks from second lieutenant in 1912 to full general by 1920, when the Cossack Brigade's Russian officers were dismissed and replaced by British officers, headed by General Edmund Ironside. Between November 1920 and February 1921 Ironside brought Reza Khan into the position of commander of the Cossack Brigade. Over the winter, Ironside and Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Smyth provided ammunition, supplies and pay to the Brigade, restoring its morale. In January, Ironside wrote in his diary, "a military dictatorship would solve our troubles and let us out of the country without any trouble at all."<sup>316</sup> On February 14, 1921, recalled to Baghdad, Ironside released Reza Khan from his command and gave him the go-ahead to do as he saw fit, with the simple promise not to depose the shah.<sup>317</sup> Smyth meanwhile was in touch with two of Reza's officers, as well as Sayyid Zia al-Din Tabatabai, a 34 year-old French-educated Tehran journalist who was reform-minded and fairly pro-British. Smyth gave Reza advice on how to carry out the coup.<sup>318</sup> The British minister Herman Norman seems to have been informed by Ironside a week before the coup (February 14 or 15), and been fearful for the shah.<sup>319</sup> Walter Smart, the Oriental Secretary at the British legation, definitely knew what Smyth and Ironside were doing.<sup>320</sup> On the evening that the coup occurred, Lieutenant-Colonel Haig from the legation advised the Swedish commander of the Tehran gendarmerie that resistance to the Cossacks would be futile, while the next day Norman counselled the shah to acquiesce in the demands of the coup-makers.<sup>321</sup> After the coup Norman urged his government to support the new regime, which

<sup>316</sup> Ironside's diary for January 14, 1921, quoted by Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 181 note. See also Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, 386, and Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 9-15.

<sup>317</sup> Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 182. Ironside's diary for February 23, 1921 reads: "Reza Khan has carried out a coup d'etat in Tehran, but true to his promise to me he has declared his loyalty to the Shah... I fancy that all the people think I engineered the coup d'etat. I suppose I did strictly speaking:" *ibid.*, 183.

<sup>318</sup> When Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Grey asked Smyth about this later, Smyth replied: "I was asked for military advice, and as Instructor I had to give it." Grey seems to have found this reasonable: "It is certain that if a thing like this is going to take place, it is better that it should be carried out in an orderly manner, as it was": "Recent Persian History," 35.

<sup>319</sup> Ironside's diary entries for February 14-15, 1921 are quoted by Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 184 note.

<sup>320</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 48 note 9.

<sup>321</sup> Haig, "The Rise of Riza Khan Pahlavi," 629-30; Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 183.

he characterized as being "the most favourable to British interests which could possibly have arisen."<sup>322</sup> Why would the British officials on the spot have favored the coup? At this point they saw it as the best alternative to the unobtainable 1919 Agreement, one which would bring to power a strong government capable of meeting the challenges posed by the radical social movements and a possible Soviet advance once British troops left Iran. As Ironside noted in his diary: "Better a coup d'etat for us than anything else."<sup>323</sup>

Thus, on February 18, 1921 some two thousand Cossacks set out from Qazvin under Reza Khan's command for the capital 140 kilometers away. Reza told Haig and another British officer on February 20, just before entering Tehran, that he was "marching to the capital to establish a Government which would set its house in order instead of prating about the *Majlis*, the Constitution, and such irrelevant matters."<sup>324</sup> He pledged to serve the shah and the country, and agreed that Sayyid Zia al-Din would be prime minister and he himself minister of war. On the evening of February 21 the Cossacks entered the city, took the police headquarters with small loss of life, and arrested 70 to 80 people, including army generals, politicians, nationalists and newspaper editors. By February 23 Ahmad Shah had agreed that Zia would be the prime minister.<sup>325</sup>

**The restoration of order.** The new government of Zia al-Din pledged internal order, social reforms and national independence. An early proclamation promised renunciation of the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement, strengthening the army and distribution of crown lands among the peasants. These and other proposals soon alienated merchants and landlords from Zia's regime, and a showdown occurred with Reza Khan over the retention of British officers in charge of the army, which the new minister of war staunchly refused. Reza Khan, the shah and some of the imprisoned conservative politicians arranged the departure of Zia in May 1921, and three other prime ministers (one twice) came and went in the next two years.<sup>326</sup>

<sup>322</sup> Zirinsky, "Blood, Power, and Hypocrisy," 280, citing Foreign Office records.

<sup>323</sup> Diary entry of February 14, 1921, quoted by Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 184 note.

<sup>324</sup> Quoted by Haig, "The Rise of Riza Khan Pahlavi," 629.

<sup>325</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 43-47; Balfour, *Recent Happenings in Persia*, 225.

<sup>326</sup> See Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 118-19; Balfour, *Recent Happenings in Persia*, 228, 233; Grey, "Recent Persian History," 35-39; and Avery, *Modern Iran*, 253-54.

The post-coup government moved decisively to improve its relations with the two new powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to offset Iran's dependence on Great Britain in the 1918-21 period. Reza Khan himself had little affection for any of the foreign powers, including Britain which had done so much to establish him.<sup>327</sup> Britain did support the Zia government, providing 80,000 tumans for the army *one day* after the coup.<sup>328</sup> In a general way they were pleased at the prospect of a central government strong enough to maintain a modicum of social order, as they were withdrawing their own forces from Iran. But they were far from certain they could deal with Reza Khan, and until 1924 they also supported the autonomous tribal chief Shaikh Khaz'al in Khuzistan where their oilfields lay. The United States increased its political and economic ties with Iran, seeking oil concessions for American companies in the north (unsuccessfully, due to British and Soviet opposition), and sending Dr. A.C. Millspaugh in August 1921 as a financial adviser to the Iranian government. Millspaugh brought about budgetary reforms and raised taxes, but was unable to secure a loan or capital investments from American sources—the U.S. was still far from being aware of Iran's strategic value.<sup>329</sup> Soviet support for the new regime was quick in coming: on February 26, 1921, just a few days after the coup, relations were normalized by the signing of a treaty of friendship, as both governments were in need of mutual recognition. This laid the groundwork for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Gilan later in the year. The Soviets seemed almost as eager for stability in Iran as the British, given the threat of foreign intervention against their revolution.<sup>330</sup>

This last development contributed to the defeat of the postwar social movements by Reza's armed forces, the next step in his bid for power. Rapprochement between the U.S.S.R. and the Iranian government undercut the former's support for the Jangal rebellion in Gilan; Blumkin, the Bolshevik intelligence officer among the Jangalis, is said to have claimed that "the Gilan movement

<sup>327</sup> Just before the coup itself he is said to have told an Iranian officer: "All the Cossack officers at Qazvin and Tehran must unite to get the foreigners out of Iran, and to annihilate the foreigner-lovers." Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 42, quoting Husain Makki, *Tarikh-i Bist Saleh-yi Iran* [Twenty-Year History of Iran] (Tehran: 'Ilmi, 1944), I, 108.

<sup>328</sup> Mehraïn, "The Emergence of Capitalist Authoritarian States," 244.

<sup>329</sup> Keddie, "The Impact of the West," 165-70; *idem*, *Roots of Revolution*, 89-91.

<sup>330</sup> The "Treaty of Friendship: Persia and Russia" (February 26, 1921), is contained in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, II, 90-94.

was called off from Moscow."<sup>331</sup> In any case, the movement split, with the communist leadership becoming less militant and Kuchik Khan remaining in opposition to the central government. The end came late in 1921, after Kuchik murdered his former partner, Haidar Khan, at a dinner, and himself fled before Reza's advancing army, dying on the frozen slopes of the northern mountains.<sup>332</sup> The less threatening movements in Azarbaijan and Khurasan soon came to an end as well, due to a combination of internal conflicts, lessened Soviet support, and military actions by the central government.<sup>333</sup> Thus, by late 1921/early 1922, in a dramatic reversal of fortunes, the central government had bested the most radical of the postwar social movements.

In a second series of campaigns, Reza's army restored order to the tribal areas within Iran's territory—"in 1922, against the Kurds of Azerbaijan, the Shahsevars of northern Azerbaijan, and the Kuhgiluyeh of Fars; in 1923, against the Sanjabi Kurds of Kermanshah; in 1924, against the Baluchis of the southeast and the Lurs of the southwest; in 1925, against the Turkomans of Mazandaran, the Kurds of north Khurasan, and the Arabs supporting Shaykh Khaz'el of Muhammerah."<sup>334</sup> Sometimes he achieved his purpose by setting one tribe against another, and rewarding the winner; sometimes, as with the powerful Bakhtiari, the two sides came to terms. Certain tribal leaders were coopted with land grants, or brought into the state. The most significant of his victories was against the British-backed tribal coalition of Shaikh Khaz'al, for this proved the turning point in Britain's relations with the government, with whom they thereafter "shared" the southern oilfields.<sup>335</sup>

How was Reza Khan able to bring about this restoration of internal order? The answer lies to a certain extent in the changes he effected in the nature of the Iranian state. With little interest in social reforms, he moved quickly instead to strengthen and centralize the key institutions of finance and the army. He approved Millspaugh's introduction of indirect taxes on tobacco and matches, and

<sup>331</sup> See Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 96 note 6.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 77; Kazemi and Abrahamian, "The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry of Modern Iran," 386-87; Rey, "Persia in Perspective," 54; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism*, 80-81; Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, 371.

<sup>333</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 119; Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism*, 80-81; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 89.

<sup>334</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 120.

<sup>335</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 91.

a government monopoly on tea and sugar, which guaranteed income sufficient to balance the budget (at the expense of the urban poor and other consumers of these necessities).<sup>336</sup> The army took up to 40 percent of expenditures by 1922, and was expanded from less than 10,000 to some 40,000 men.<sup>337</sup> Reza saw to it that the troops got paid, and that their needs were attended to before any other government employees', and thereby bound the loyalty of the troops to himself.<sup>338</sup> At the same time, other areas of expansion were in the civilian bureaucracy and in certain security-related public works projects such as road-building and improvement. He was aided in these by the beginnings of a recovery in Iranian agriculture, and the growth of oil production and revenues: from a pre-war level of 80,800 tons, oil exports jumped to 4,556,000 by 1926, generating a revenue for the state of 1.4 million pounds sterling.<sup>339</sup> Though this represented a scandalously low five to ten percent of the value of the oil exported, it made possible the balancing of the budget, increased exports and public spending which consolidated the new position of the Iranian state.

**The change of dynasty.** Reza used these military successes and increments of state power to consolidate his own rise to the monarchy after 1923, in a series of adroit political maneuvers and manipulation of social forces. In October 1923 he moved from the ministry of war into the prime minister's office, while Ahmad Shah left the country for Europe on a trip of indefinite duration (he would in fact never return to Iran). In 1924 Reza made a single misstep from which he deftly recovered—the proposal that the majlis abolish the Qajar monarchy in favor of a republic with himself as president. Miscalculating the docility of the newly-elected fifth majlis (where he did have much support, as we shall see), he was also the victim of poor timing: on March 3, 1924, while the bill was before a special majlis committee, the Turkish parliament and Ataturk (which was his and everyone else's model for a republic) abolished the Ottoman Caliphate, thus disestablishing the clergy in Turkey. This naturally alarmed the Iranian ulama and made them suspicious of the

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 90. In 1923-24, revenues were 5,768,763 pounds sterling, just about equal to expenditures of 5,827,944 pounds: Avery, *Modern Iran*, 262.

<sup>337</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 100 note 3; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 120.

<sup>338</sup> Grey, "Recent Persian History," 35-36.

<sup>339</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 93 table 5.1.

republican idea. Large demonstrations were organized in Tehran for Islam and against a republic, and Reza, observing the disparity in size between these and the smaller trade union, left-wing and democratic demonstrations in favor of a republic, performed a quick *volte-face*. After ostentatiously going to Qum to consult the leading ulama, he issued a proclamation on April 1, 1924:

I exchanged ideas with the religious authorities and we came to the conclusion that it would be better for the welfare of the country if all efforts to promote a republican form of government were halted. From now on our efforts should be directed toward reforms, the strengthening of the fundamentals of religion, and the independence of the country.<sup>340</sup>

A few months later Reza rebounded politically by manipulating events surrounding the murder of the American counsel Robert Imbrie in the midst of a religiously-agitated crowd. Despite incriminating evidence of army involvement in this incident, Reza turned the occasion completely to his purpose by using it as a pretext for declaring martial law, arresting political opponents and putting the press and the ulama on the defensive. He emerged from it as the conspicuous alternative to weak Qajar government, preferable to either a left-wing democratic or ulama-led political option in the eyes both of many Iranians and foreign governments, especially the British and Americans.<sup>341</sup>

The final elements to consider in this process are the composition of the internal and external social forces that backed Reza in his bid for power, and his skillful manipulation of these groups—the ulama and conservative party, Western-educated liberal democrats and more authoritarian-minded nationalist modernizers, and the socialist and communist parties and trade union movement—all of whom he would attack later in his reign. In essence he managed, if not to be “all things to all people,” at least to offer something to nearly everyone, while, on their side, his erstwhile “partners” were rather easily deceived, at least in retrospect.

First of all, he commanded rather diffuse support from key classes and groups within society at large. Merchants and landlords recognized that Reza was not a radical reformer and would safeguard their property against left-wing social movements. Two hundred merchants expressed their gratitude

<sup>340</sup> Quoted in Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 79. On the republic issue, see *ibid.*, 76-79; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 134; Zirinsky, “Blood, Power, and Hypocrisy,” 280-81; Grey, “Recent Persian History,” 39; and Avery, *Modern Iran*, 267.

<sup>341</sup> On the various aspects of the murder of Imbrie, see Zirinsky, “Blood, Power and Hypocrisy,” *passim*, and Avery, *Modern Iran*, 263-64.

in a 1922 open letter, stating "Thanks to the army commander, we now travel without fear, admire our country, and enjoy the fruits of law and order."<sup>342</sup> He also made conspicuous gestures toward the ulama, on the republican issue, by pilgrimages to the holy cities of Iraq, with receptions at his house in Tehran, and organization of religious processions. His leading religious opponent Mudarris was temporarily neutralized in 1924-25 by a conciliatory peace-offering.<sup>343</sup> Part of the intelligentsia, including some poets and writers, civil servants, politicians and professionals, was even more impressed by Reza, especially the veneer of nationalism he acquired in lessening British power in Iran and strengthening the state. There was a fairly widespread expectation that he would modernize and industrialize the country along lines that would benefit this class. Individuals who opposed him or saw the undemocratic future he was constructing were murdered, intimidated, or bought off.<sup>344</sup> The extra-parliamentary left, notably the trade unions and communists, also offered support, first for the republican proposal in 1924, and in general approved what they perceived as his nationalist and secular tendencies, again with the consequence of ignoring his authoritarian and anti-progressive views. They realized their mistake only at the last moment, in 1925, when Reza suppressed the unions and communists thoroughly.<sup>345</sup>

The three principal sources of Reza's assumption of the monarchy were the army, the majority parties in the fifth majlis, and the major foreign powers. Reza's use of patronage brought the army as an institution for the first time since the eighteenth century back into the power structure of Iran. Martial law allowed him to offer governorships to loyal officers, create armies of the North, South, East and West and staff them with his own men, and to send inspectors to public works projects and all governmental departments. The army thus gave him total support, and its material defeat of the radical and tribal movements was an important legitimating mechanism.<sup>346</sup>

<sup>342</sup> Quoted in Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 131. On merchant and landlord support, see also Avery, *Modern Iran*, 265, and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 87, 91-91.

<sup>343</sup> On Reza Khan and the ulama in this period, see Zirinsky, "Blood, Power, and Hypocrisy," 284; Avery, *Modern Iran*, 264; and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 90-91.

<sup>344</sup> On Reza and the intelligentsia, see Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 17-18, and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 89.

<sup>345</sup> On Reza's relations with, and the nature of the unions and left in general, see Floor, *Labour Unions*, 22-23, 70-71 note 102; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 127-33; and Kazemi and Abrahamian, "The Nonrevolutionary Peasantry of Modern Iran," 286.

<sup>346</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 259.

The fifth majlis, opening in 1924, was a second pillar in Reza's rise. The elections were manipulated to a certain degree in the provinces and tribal areas by Reza's handpicked martial law governors. He himself "took the position that the successful man in each district would be one who came from the leading family and who would support his policies."<sup>347</sup> The conservative, clerical Reformers' Party (*Hizb-i Islah-taliban*), which had held the majority in the fourth majlis, gave way to the young, Western-educated reformers of the Revival Party (*Hizb-i Tajadod*), whose program emphasized a well-run state and army, expansion of education, development of Iran's industry, and other modernizing reforms. Reza shifted his own support from the Reformers' to the Revival Party as the balance of power between the two shifted. In May 1924 a new journal supporting the Revival Party called for a "revolutionary dictator:"

In a country where 99 percent of the population is under the electoral sway of the reactionary mullas, our only hope is a Mussolini who can break the influence of the traditional authorities, and thus create a modern outlook, a modern people, and a modern nation.<sup>348</sup>

Though the party also contained prominent Democrats from the constitutional movement, and worked in a loose alliance with Iskandari's Socialist Party, it became on the whole the vehicle of Reza Khan in his bid for total power, seeing in him the answer to the problems of national disunity, dependence and backwardness.

Finally, the world-system provided favorable conditions in this period. By 1924, with Reza's defeat of Shaikh Khaz'al and the definitive integration of the oil-producing provinces into Iranian national territory, the British came to see in him the strong man who would protect "their" oil and contain any Bolshevik threats. Thus, the British minister saw "benevolent inaction" as "the last choice left," and their policy turned to one of support for him.<sup>349</sup> The Soviets meanwhile had pressing internal problems of their own, and as we have seen also chose to support a non-revolutionary

<sup>347</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 75. See too Avery, *Modern Iran*, 265, and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 132, on the elections.

<sup>348</sup> From the opening editorial of *Farangistan* (Europe [!]), May 1924, quoted by Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 124. On the Reformers' and Revival parties, see *ibid.*, 120-24.

<sup>349</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 260. Evidence of typical official views of Reza as the required strong man can be found in the remarks of Sir Louis Dane, Major-General Sir George MacMunn, and Lieutenant-Colonel W. G. Grey in Grey's "Recent Persian History," 40, 42.

government in Iran as a factor of stability that would ward off *Western* intervention. In 1923 the Comintern praised prime minister Reza Khan for "his progressive and anti-imperialist orientation."<sup>350</sup> The newest world power on the scene, the United States, followed Britain's foreign policy, accepting Reza's conduct of the hasty investigation into the murder of Imbrie because it saw in him the only man capable of maintaining order in Iran and able to recognize American "strength and majesty."<sup>351</sup> Thus did Reza perform the amazing feat of satisfying the major capitalist *and* socialist world powers while still appearing to be a nationalist within his own country.

There was some opposition to Reza's rise to power, but it was circumscribed in a number of ways. Some dissent with respect to the coup itself back in 1921, had, for example, been expressed:

... next to the opening words 'I command' of Rezā Khān's martial-law declaration, printed on the city walls everywhere, there appeared overnight the taunting response 'Go to hell' ('Guh mīkhurī'). [The Iranian public] found it not only unacceptable but also incredible that Rezā Khān, or anyone else, would seriously presume to take *command* of their lives.<sup>352</sup>

Artisans had marched and demonstrated against Reza's proposed republic in 1924, but less out a democratic egalitarian ideal than because they feared his secularism.<sup>353</sup> Individual journalists and editors had criticized him in their papers, for which more than one was threatened with violence, beaten or murdered.<sup>354</sup> And likewise individual politicians of diverse views had sensed and opposed his increasingly despotic tendencies. These included the popular conservative preacher Mudarris, and nationalists and democrats such as Taqizadeh and a young man of the landed elite, Muhammad Mussadiq. But these individuals found themselves boxed into a corner and isolated by Reza's astute maneuvering, left with the non-viable options of defending the discredited Qajar monarchy or the stillborn democratic republic.<sup>355</sup>

<sup>350</sup> Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism*, 81.

<sup>351</sup> Zirinsky, "Blood, Power, and Hypocrisy," 285, quoting U.S. Chargé Murray's words.

<sup>352</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 80. "Guh mikhuri" literally means "Eat shit."

<sup>353</sup> Floor, "The Big Merchants (*tujjār*)," 135; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 134.

<sup>354</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 261.

<sup>355</sup> On Mudarris see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 86-88; on Mussadiq and other progressives in the fifth majlis, Avery, *Modern Iran*, 265-66.

In the autumn of 1925 the Revival Party, with support from the Reformists, proposed the deposition of the Qajars in the majlis, and temporary transfer of the royal title to prime minister Reza Khan until a constituent assembly could meet to ratify the decision. Mudarris stormed out of the building without delivering a formal speech; Mussadiq, Taqizadeh and two others spoke in vain.<sup>356</sup> On October 31 Ahmad Shah Qajar was deposed. On December 12, 1925 the constituent assembly voted that Reza Khan assume the title Reza Shah Pahlavi by a margin of 115 to 4 with 20 abstentions.<sup>357</sup> Article 36 of the supplement to the constitution was amended to read:

The Constitutional Monarchy of Iran is vested by the Constituent Assembly, on behalf of the nation, in the person of His Majesty, the Shahanshah Reza Shah Pahlavi, and shall remain in his male progeny generation after generation.<sup>358</sup>

Though "The change of dynasty ... was not marked by any spontaneous enthusiasm,"<sup>359</sup> it had turned a historical corner, propelled not by a mass movement for social change, as this was associated with the defeat of the Constitutional Revolution in 1911, but by a 1921 coup d'état favored by the main external power of the time, Britain, and pushed through to a change of dynasty in 1925 by a skillful military centralizer with significant, if misplaced, urban support from the ulama, and nationalist middle classes.

<sup>356</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 91.

<sup>357</sup> The four "no" votes were cast by Mussadiq, Taqizadeh, Yahya Daulatabadi and Husain 'Ala. Mudarris and Mustaufi al-Mamalik were among those absent: Avery, *Modern Iran*, 267. It was apparently only at this point that Sulaiman Mirza Iskandari, the socialist leader in the majlis, realized that Reza had deceived him in promising to become only an unhereditary monarch: Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 91, 99 note 30.

<sup>358</sup> Quoted in Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), 43.

<sup>359</sup> "Recent Developments in Persia," pp. 130-132 in *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, volume XIII, part II (1926), 132.

## Conclusion to Part Two

### The Theoretical Significance of the Qajar Period

Virtually *all* of the conceptual apparatus elaborated in Chapter One has been brought into play in Part Two of this dissertation, and all of it has been found useful. In particular:

Dependent development and world-system considerations gave us the keys to the articulation of modes of production in the Iranian social formation. Chapter Four analyzed the degree of stasis and change in the nineteenth century as the three modes of production that combined in the period from 1500 to 1800—the peasant crop-sharing, pastoral nomadic and petty-commodity craft modes—were preserved but undermined under the Western impact and internal logic of development. Alongside them meanwhile emerged a small new capitalist mode of production with particular features, including the dominance of foreign capital and the partial formation of the Iranian working class outside the country as migrant labor in adjacent Russia. The world-system also impinged on this process of class formation and dependency, making the Qajar social formation dependent on *two* world core powers—Britain and (in this context at least) Russia—whose rivalry blocked the hegemonic situation of colonialism found elsewhere, as in India, *and* limited development within the dependent context. When the world-system shifted radically after 1917, a whole new situation was created in Iran, and Reza Khan's coup was made possible partly as a result of this (see the concept of *stalemate* below).

The *complexity* of the Iranian class structure as it formed in these conditions set the parameters of the social movements which occurred in the Qajar period. The historical-comparative analysis of these in Chapter Five led to the elaboration of a key new concept—the multi-class *populist* alliance. We saw that when a wide range of dominated and intermediate classes has grievances, explosive anti-state, anti-foreign social movements can emerge and make initial gains, but that by the same token, the differences among the principal classes involved in both the leadership and social bases of

these movements rendered ultimate success elusive.

Class alliances and conflicts reposed on the economic structure but were expressed in political and ideological terms, allowing us to see the importance of *political cultures* of opposition and legitimation. Thus, at the levels of the leadership of the Constitutional Revolution we saw the ulama split between constitutionalism, royal absolutism and revolutionary Islam, while the intelligentsia elaborated new ideologies of nationalism, democracy and socialism. The classes composing the mass movement likewise exhibited complex and sometimes contradictory value orientations: the artisans' devotion to both Islam and a communal, egalitarian social order; workers' mix of Islam, trade unionism and nationalism; tribespeople's unstable (or rather, unpredictable) mix of tribal loyalty, Islamic fervor, respect for the monarchy and instinctive egalitarianism. Opposed to these was the elite value system of landlords, bureaucrats, tribal chiefs and the Qajar family itself, based on hierarchy and domination. The ways in which these ideologies and their carriers coalesced or contended, trying to forge alliances or mobilize against their opponents, helped account for both the basic line-ups of social forces (the pro- and anti-constitutional coalitions), *and* the splits within such key classes as the ulama, artisans and merchants. No united front could be maintained against the main enemies, the Qajar state and foreign powers, which led to the defeat of the constitutional movement.

The notion of an intertwined political, economic and ideological crisis (what Althusser has called *overdetermination*) proved useful again for understanding the periods of 1906-11 and 1918-25, as it had for the 1722 change of dynasty in Part One. The difference is that in the Qajar period we were able to trace this crisis to its roots in dependency, itself a concept which Chapter Four showed had economic, political and ideological dimensions. Methodologically this was discerned by a framework sensitive to the *dialectical* relationships posited between culture, politics and economy; external structures of control and internal responses of resistance to them; and on a greater level of abstraction, the general interplay between structure and history invoked by Marx's "Eighteenth Brumaire" and Sartre's *Search for a Method*. Chapters Four and Five each tried to capture one side of this dialectic, which is seen fully only in considering the two types of analysis together.

The *state* ultimately emerged in the period from 1800 to 1925 as a key actor in the Iranian social formation. This is seen in the comparison between the weakness of the Qajars, caused by the world-system's pressures and internal challenges, and the eventual stability of Reza Khan's new state, which found its source of strength after 1921 in a new component in the Iranian state, an efficiently-administered army. In between these weak and strong states there existed from 1906 to 1921 a transitional state with its own new institutions—the majlis, and in civil society, the political parties, trade unions and free press—which would eventually come into conflict with Reza Khan's conception of the state.

Finally, the concept of a *stalemate* of social forces—the state and internal elites/foreign capital/social movements—proved an illuminating notion for understanding the conjuncture that led to the coup. By 1920, so many forces had pulled Iran in different directions for so long that something had to give. The temporary withdrawal of the Soviets and the uncertainty of the British (i.e., the new conjuncture in the world-system), the weakness of the Qajar state, and the fragmentation of the social movements gave Reza Khan his chance. The new order would be different from the old, as we shall see in Part Three of this study. A stronger state would clamp down its hold on civil society, and face a changing world-system in which the United States and Soviet Union began to contend for power in Iran, as well as Great Britain, which still had the strongest position in 1925.

**Part Three**  
**Social Structure and Social Change**  
**in Pahlavi Iran, 1925-1979**

### **Introduction to Part Three**

We have now arrived at the threshold of the contemporary period. Part Three of this dissertation deals with the tremendous changes in social structure associated with the emergence of the capitalist mode of production in Iran under the aegis of dependent development, and the series of dramatic social upheavals that punctuated this process, either fostering or challenging it—the abdication of Reza Shah, the Allied invasion and occupation in World War 2, Soviet-inspired secession movements in Kurdistan and Azarbaijan after the war, the oil nationalization struggle of Dr. Muhammad Mussadiq, the CIA-backed coup that established Muhammad Reza Pahlavi's domination in 1953, and the massively popular but loosely united revolution that brought the shah down in 1978-79. The period covered is the fifty-odd years from 1925 to 1979, corresponding to the entire reign of the Pahlavi dynasty.

Full use will be made in Part Three of the central concepts derived from our synthesis of perspectives on development and social change—dependency, world-system, modes of production, state autonomy and political cultures of opposition, and the basic relevance of this framework for shedding light on the making of the Iranian Revolution will hopefully be demonstrated. Briefly put, we will observe a protracted struggle for national independence in a world-system dominated after World War 2 by a new core power, the United States. The Pahlavis' ambitious attempt to bring Iran out of the periphery of this system and raise the country to semi-peripheral status was accomplished within the limits of dependent development, fueled by an oil-enclave economy and guaranteed by a strong military-autocratic state ultimately backed with American support. In mode of production terms we will trace the spread of capitalist relations and growth of the Iranian working class, but equally significant, the perseverance of classes located in other modes of production—ulama, artisans and merchants in the petty-commodity mode; peasants and landlords in the crop-sharing mode; tribespeople and khans in the pastoral-nomadic mode—and the appearance of a large marginalized

underclass with diverse origins in the urban sector. In the course of half a century, these dominant groups and classes would elaborate and forge several political cultures of opposition to the dependent capitalist development stamped on Iran by the Pahlavis and the United States. These political currents include varieties of Islam, liberal nationalism and socialism, which together would in the long run prove capable of mobilizing a powerful mass movement against the state and foreign domination. All of these threads of our analysis will be specified and brought into mutual context in the four chapters that follow.

Chapters Six and Eight chronicle the transformations of social structure by taking Iran in 1925, 1941, 1953 and 1978. Chapters Seven and Nine follow the vicissitudes of mass movements, focussing on two principal periods—1951-53 and 1978-79—but attending to several key moments (1941, 1946, 1963) as well. A continuing dialectic of objective economic conditions and subjective opposition movements will be pursued: the two chapters on social structure explore a new concept—"the compression of social forces"—referring to periods in which the classes are fettered from expressing themselves by a hegemonic state; in each case however, this leads to an explosion of opposition to dependent development, and the chapters on social movements thus continue our earlier analysis of Iran's "populist alliance."

## Chapter Six

**State, Society and Economy in the Reza Shah Period, 1925-1941:**

### **The Compression of Social Forces**

... without falling into unnecessary eulogizing and mythologizing ... [consider] ... the concrete facts of putting the entire country under the control of a newly created central administration, of modernizing its institutions, maintaining the integrity of its frontiers, establishing a new code of common law, creating a national bank as a firm basis for the national currency and business, designing a modern pattern for the national education, founding universities and schools of all grades and levels, building a railway that is one of the greatest feats of modern times, erecting factories for the production of common goods, developing modern industries, socially reforming the country from its roots, repressing if not totally obliterating secular abuses and corruption, liberating womenfolk from the veil and making them eligible for every degree of instruction and advancement, and putting an end to the foreign exploitation of the natural richness of Iranian soil.

—Pio Filippani Ronconi, "The Tradition of Sacred Kingship in Iran," pp 51-83 in George Lenczowski, editor, *Iran Under the Pahlavis* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 82.

\* \* \*

Altogether he thoroughly milked the country, grinding down the peasants, tribesmen and laborers, and taking heavy toll from the landlords. While his activities enriched a new class of "capitalists"—merchants, monopolists, contractors, and politician-favorites—, inflation, heavy taxation, and other measures lowered the standard of living of the masses.

—A. Millspough, *Americans in Persia* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1946), 34.

The reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi from 1925 to 1941 has engendered rather contradictory assessments, as the paired epigraphs above alone would suggest. Among other reasons this may be because a hitherto unprecedented constellation of state, society and economy was forged in the hot-house of dependent, increasingly capitalist, development in the changing world-systemic conjuncture of the 1930s. During this period Reza Shah's newly consolidated autocratic state took advantage of lessened *direct* domination by Great Britain to initiate industrial and infrastructural development by clamping down on society, reasserting central control in a way unseen since the Safavids at their zenith. This process was riven with political, economic and ideological contradictions, some of which assumed their full stature only after Reza's abdication in 1941 before the advancing allied armies. In this chapter we will attempt to adjudicate the polarity of judgments of this period by exploring, in sequence, Iran's state, class structure, relations with the West and frustrated social movements, within the context of *dependent development* and a *compression of social forces*, largely orchestrated by the new Pahlavi autocratic state.

### I. Reza Shah's State: Military Autocracy, Modernization and Westernization

The Iranian state assumed extensive political and economic powers during the reign of Reza Shah by comparison with the dismal standards of the Qajar dynasty. Authority reposed ultimately in the hands of the shah, whose key institutional base was the army, and hence we may term the regime a *military autocracy*.<sup>1</sup> Strong internal domination in turn underpinned a considerable *state intervention* in the economic activity of the country, both in infrastructure and in industry, which will be discussed in section II on the economy, below. The ideological justifications for the extensive reforms of the judiciary, educational and other institutions which this "modernization" project required

<sup>1</sup> Other characterizations of Reza's state include Rey's "corporative autocracy," Katouzian's "authentic Iranian despotism—that is, the combination of both absolute and arbitrary power," and Abrahamian's reference to a "New Order," with its overtones of fascism: see Lucien Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," pp. 69-98 in *New Left Review*, number 20 (Summer 1963), 77; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 109; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 135. Cf. also the suggestive phrase "the organized omnipotence of the state": William S. Haas, *Iran* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 217. I have little quarrel with these essentially interchangeable terms, although I prefer to highlight the *military* bases of Reza Shah's power. The political science concept of the "bureaucratic-authoritarian" state is roughly appropriate as well, though in the Iranian case it would underestimate the personal power of the shah over the newly centralized bureaucracy: see David Collier, editor, *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

included a contradictory blend of *secular nationalism* and *Westernization*, and further intruded the state's new bureaucratic apparatus into the lives of the population, urban, tribal and peasant alike.

#### **I.A. Reforms, Institutions and Personal Aggrandizement**

Reza Shah's primary reform was the creation of a strong army capable of enforcing state authority. Upton points out that most of his other reforms, large and small, centered around this, or contributed to it in some way.<sup>2</sup> These included raising state revenues through taxation, banking and customs measures; improving the communication system by building Iran's first railway and adding to the existing road, telegraph and telephone networks; making military service compulsory through conscription, which required the adoption of last names, registration of births and provincial reorganization generally; creation of secular judicial and educational systems which seriously undermined clerical power; the participation of women in education, the economy and public life (though not in elections); the extension of health and sanitation services; and a prototype of urban renewal to enhance law and order by cutting wide boulevards through the crowded districts of the major cities.<sup>3</sup> We might term this process "state-led military modernization"; it is the congruence and underlying direction of these measures as well as the manner of their devising and implementation that justify characterization of the regime as a military autocracy. Let us now examine in more detail the institutional arrangements of the new state.

The army, the bureaucracy and the government proper (cabinet and majlis) constituted the three institutional pillars of the regime. The army was enormously expanded from the several thousand members of the Cossack Brigade in the early 1920s to some 126,000 men under arms and a total mobilizable force of 400,000 by 1941, a huge number given a total population of less than five million economically active males. This was made possible by requiring two years of compulsory military service from every male (plus many more years on active or nominal reserve). Recruits,

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Upton, *The History of Modern Iran: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 53-54.

<sup>3</sup> These reforms are covered in detail in Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*; and Lester A. Lee, "The Reforms of Reza Shah: 1925-1941," M.A. thesis, Department of History, Stanford University (1950).

reluctantly taken from their villages, were exposed to urban life, and perhaps a bit of literacy education and instruction in trades. A small air force and navy were also created with training and equipment provided by France, the Soviet Union, Italy and Britain. Official budgetary figures indicate an average of 33.5 percent of total revenues spent for military purposes from 1926 to 1941; in addition, a large proportion of the oil revenues (which did not figure in the budget) were devoted to purchasing expensive weaponry and establishing a few armaments industries in Tehran and elsewhere. Allocations to the military grew from two million pounds sterling in 1925 to 6.86 million pounds by 1941, and a special military bank established to administer this budget was rife with mismanagement and corruption. High-ranking officers, though kept out of the civil bureaucracy and cabinet, became wealthy and powerful members of the ruling class, often acquiring landed estates. This vast military apparatus, as we shall see in section IV below, was used primarily to crush internal social movements and opposition in the 1920s and 1930s (aided by the regular police and a newly established secret police), but proved powerless against greater external forces when the Allies occupied Iran in 1941.

The second pillar of Reza Shah's state was the civil bureaucracy, which like the army was greatly expanded, reorganized and far better trained than under the Qajars. The new bureaucracy comprised some "90,000 full-time government personnel employed in the ten civilian ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance, Education, Trade, Post and Telegraph, Agriculture, Roads, and Industry."<sup>4</sup> The amount of the budget devoted to administration grew almost five times (in *rials*) between 1930 and 1941, though its share of revenues fell from 50 to 30 percent as the state became more involved in economic activity.<sup>5</sup> Formerly the province of the Qajar elite and the old administrative families, its ranks were now increasingly open to the educated middle classes. Salaries however were low, and bribery and graft continued to plague the system at all levels, those at the highest echelons of course becoming part of the elite, while the middle and lower ranks occupied corresponding rungs in urban society, often finding it difficult to make ends meet. Inefficiency

<sup>4</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 136-37.

<sup>5</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 32.

too remained a problem as the machinery of government became more complex; both unwieldiness of size and the total control of the shah at the top hindered the smooth working of the various departments.<sup>6</sup> In the provinces the state spread its control through a territorial reorganization of the country from the Qajar system of four huge provinces into 11 provinces, subdivided into 49 counties, further broken down into a great many municipalities and rural districts. Little local initiative was allowed as the ministry of the interior at Tehran appointed municipal officials, although a 1930 law did empower city governments to spend their own revenues locally.<sup>7</sup>

The expansion of government was made possible by the state's entry into the field of education. In 1920 there had been as few as 10,000 students in all 600 schools—state, private, religious, foreign missionary—in Iran combined. By 1940 there were 8,237 schools, with 13,646 teachers and 496,960 students, all under state control. Adult education involved a further 157,000 people. The budget allocation for education averaged about four percent, but grew from 100,000 to three million pounds sterling.<sup>8</sup> The ulama's religiously-oriented schools, which had accounted for the majority of institutions and students in the Qajar era, lost tremendous ground in this educational expansion: enrollments at the primary (*maktab*) level rose from 28,949 to 37,287 between 1925 and 1941, but at the higher seminary (*madrasa*) level they declined seriously from 5,984 to 785.<sup>9</sup> The Iranian elite and middle classes increasingly pursued state-provided education at the upper levels, in the newly founded University of Tehran, technical schools run by the various ministries, or universities abroad. Keddie underlines the class bias of the system, pointing out that "Less than 10 percent of the population received any elementary education, and, for secondary education, the figure was under one percent."<sup>10</sup> Such as it was, this expansion of education not only helped staff the growing bureaucracy, but also contributed to the emergence and growth of a new professional and intellectual class (starting with the teachers themselves) to be considered in section II below. The state further made use of

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wilber: "The full flowering of this system resulted in countless matters of minor importance being referred to the cabinet for decisions": *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 250.

<sup>7</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 60-61, 118; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 137.

<sup>8</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 91, 105, 108, 116; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 260-61; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 87; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 108.

<sup>9</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 145.

<sup>10</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 108.

the system to stifle free political inquiry and impose conformity on this intelligentsia, channelling curricula to inculcate "servile adulation, propaganda support, and ideological justification."<sup>11</sup>

Reza Shah was not, of course, the sole architect of the reforms of his period. Particularly in the first half of his reign he was ably assisted by accomplished administrators within his cabinet, which together with the more docile majlis formed a third pillar of his regime. Chief among these top advisors were 'Ali Akbar Davar, Abdal Husain Khan Taimurtash, Sardar As'ad and Firuz Mirza. The last of these served as finance minister until his fall from grace in 1929, when he was arrested, accused of bribery and murdered. Taimurtash acted as minister of court from 1926 to 1932 at which time Reza Shah decided he was too powerful and had him imprisoned for taking bribes. He died in 1933, officially of heart failure and pneumonia. Sardar As'ad, the Bakhtiari chief who served as minister of war was likewise arrested in 1933 and though never charged with a crime, died in prison the next year. Finally, in 1937, Davar, the architect of Iran's Civil Code and then minister of finance, committed suicide after falling out with the shah over economic policy. All of these men, having literally outlived their usefulness, were precipitously discarded by Reza Shah, suspicious of their independence and potential popularity. Others, such as Taqizadeh, a hero of the Constitutional Revolution who served in Reza's early cabinets, went into exile. The figures chosen to head ministries after the mid-1930s were less strong-willed, which suited Reza's purpose of autocratic control but undermined his access to critical information and astute administration. These factors would play a role in his own fall in 1941.<sup>12</sup>

A similar pattern of increasing royal control over the majlis and public political life is easily discerned. The most outspoken figures of the mid-1920s were soon removed from the scene: an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the cleric Sayyid Hasan Mudarris in 1926 was followed by his

<sup>11</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 101; also 92-93, 110-111.

<sup>12</sup> On Taimurtash, see Miron Rezun, "Reza Shah's Court Minister: Teymourtash," pp. 119-137 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 12, number 2 (September 1980); "The Rise and Fall of Teymourtash," p. 93 in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, volume XXI, part 1 (January 1934); Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 113, 154, 156, 253; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 94; and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 119. On Davar, see Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 121, 177, 253, and Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 59. On Firuz, Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 121, and Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 59. On Sardar As'ad, Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 157, 253.

imprisonment and banishment to a remote village in 1928-29, and his murder in 1938, while the voice of the liberal nationalist Muhammad Mussadiq was silenced in 1928 when he was not "re-elected" to the majlis, after which he retired to his estate, and was put under house arrest in 1940-41.<sup>13</sup> Other opposition personalities were arrested, exiled or retired from public life; in all there were "several hundred murders laid to Reza Shah's account."<sup>14</sup> The four political parties that were represented in the majlis in the late 1920s were all essentially pro-regime, but Reza abruptly dissolved them, again fearing the emergence of articulate rivals. In 1932 the shah spoke once again of the need for "patriotic parties devoted to the country," but nothing came of this either.<sup>15</sup> Through all of this, majlis deputies continued to be elected every two years, but as private individuals rather than as members of parties. All elections from the sixth majlis (1926) to the thirteenth (1940) were carefully controlled through the ministry of the interior with the aid of the provincial governors. Landlords, non-bazaar businessmen and senior civil servants constituted up to 84 percent of all deputies in the Reza Shah period, while the number of ulama dropped from 24 in 1925 to virtually none by 1940. The majlis degenerated into a totally compliant rubber stamp quite early in Reza's reign, as the British minister noted in 1926:

... the Persian Majles cannot be taken seriously. The deputies are not free agents, any more than the elections to the Majles are free. When the Shah wants a measure, it is passed. When he is opposed, it is withdrawn. When he is indifferent, a great deal of aimless discussion takes place.<sup>16</sup>

Thus Reza kept up constitutional appearances but in reality acted as a "constitutional dictator" who brooked no organized dissent within the state and ruthlessly crushed any outside it (a subject treated in section IV below).

A final, non-institutional pillar of the new state was its economic resources, on a scale and scope far outstripping the Qajar dynasty's, and indeed harking back to the Safavids' position of

<sup>13</sup> On Mudarris and Mussadiq, see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 122, 123, 125, 135 note 2; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 130, 145; and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 94.

<sup>14</sup> Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 59.

<sup>15</sup> On these parties see Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 122-23, 147, 254, 255; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 138-39.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted by Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 138. On the majlis see also *ibid.*, 138, 140, 150; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 94; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 164, 263; and Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 59.

economic hegemony under Shah 'Abbas, with his silk monopoly. Much of the relevant material on the state's economic activity will be considered in section II; here we shall indicate the dimensions of state revenues and expenditures, and its controls over trade and economy. Total state revenues grew over 15 times between 1924 and 1941, from 237 million rials to 3.61 billion rials.<sup>17</sup> Oil revenues rose tenfold from 469,000 pounds sterling in 1919/20 to 4,271,000 pounds in 1939/40. Since this represented as little as 10 percent (possibly up to 25 percent) of state income, the vast majority must have come from other sources, with significant contributions from the state trade and industrial monopolies (28 percent), the land tax (10-20 percent), customs (about 10 percent), the new income taxes (about 7 percent), and government monopoly taxes on tea and sugar (over 5 percent), these last being items of mass consumption.<sup>18</sup> Expenditures rose enormously in this period as well, from 276 million rials in 1928 to 4.17 billion rials by 1941. As spending rose however, priorities shifted: state investment in industries and trade leaped from 1.1 percent of budget allocations in 1928 to 24.1 percent in 1941, while direct defense spending fell from 40.4 to 14.2 percent (though still growing fourfold in absolute terms). The only other large allocation in 1941 went to "communications" (26.2 percent, some of which was indirect military spending), while health accounted for only 2.0 percent of the budget and agriculture a mere 2.9 percent (up from nothing in 1928).<sup>19</sup> The budget, which had been balanced in 1925, went into a deficit of 710 million rials by 1941 (about \$39 million), the result of massive spending on the military, the railroad and industries.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 169 note 26. Keddie notes that this represents only a tenfold increase measured in terms of the pound sterling: *Roots of Revolution*, 102. In general, calculating the dollar or pound equivalents of Iranian currency in this period is a nightmare due to shifting official and black market rates (and a paucity of complete time series data in my own research). Two very rough benchmarks to use are 18 rials to the dollar and five dollars (thus 90 rials) to the pound sterling, for the 1930s: see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 168 note 36, and Gholam Reza Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy and Economic Development in the Interwar Period," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, Stanford University (1956), 89, 223.

<sup>18</sup> On oil revenues, see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 142; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 159; and Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 223. The latter's analysis suggests that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's total contribution to the Iranian economy was twice its direct royalty payments, perhaps accounting for Bharier's upper figure of 25 percent. On other sources of income, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 148; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 77; and Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 112 table 24. I have been unable to trace the remaining 5 to 30 percent of the state's revenue.

<sup>19</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 113 table 6.1, 114 table 6.2, 130 tables 7.1 and 7.2.

<sup>20</sup> "Recent Developments in Persia," 131; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 200.

Largely in order to finance construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway—Reza Shah's gigantic symbol of state power, national independence and economic development—the state moved to gain control of Iran's foreign trade, exchange rates and currency. When Iran's balance of payments and the value of its currency deteriorated at the end of the 1920s, a state monopoly on foreign trade was declared in 1930. The government was less interested in direct control of trade than in avoiding deficits and capturing some of the foreign exchange earned by exports so it could import goods for the railroad. Monopolies on specific items of trade were awarded to government agencies or private companies. Exporters had to either sell 90 percent of their foreign exchange to the government, or they could use up to 50 percent to import goods into Iran, selling 40 percent to the government. By the mid-1930s the state had direct or indirect control of about one-third of imports and one-half of exports, and Iran managed a slight surplus in its trade generally in that decade. Attempts to control the exchange rate of currency were less successful, as they led to black markets and then the collapse of controls within two years. In 1936 multiple exchange rates for various categories of exports were tried; this too had negative consequences for Iran's trade relations, forcing the country into extensive barter arrangements with Germany and the USSR. The long-awaited dream of a national bank was finally realized in 1927/28 when the Bank Melli was established and empowered to issue currency and regulate fiscal policy. Bank deposits grew severalfold from 1936 to 1941, making the bank a somewhat effective instrument of capital formation. In general these measures went part of the way toward addressing Iran's unequal relationship with the core powers of the world-economy, as well as helping cushion the impact of the great depression, but their limits will become apparent in discussing the domestic and international sides of the political economy below. The point here illustrated is the state's substantial role in regulating and indeed conducting much of the country's economic activity.<sup>21</sup>

The new power of the state was not without an effect on its autocratic head's personal wealth.

Despite a pious pronouncement in 1926 that the desire for wealth "causes considerable mental

<sup>21</sup> On these trade, foreign exchange and banking developments, see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 118, 130-32; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 123, 126, 242-44; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 62-169 *passim*; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 143, 195, 265; and Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 328.

annoyance and prevents one from devoting his attention to the public interests,"<sup>22</sup> by the end of his reign Reza Shah had become the wealthiest man in Iran. His account at the National Bank rose from one million rials in 1930 to 680 million by 1941 (worth some three million pounds sterling). He had in addition acquired enormous estates covering three million acres and owned shares in "numerous local factories, companies and monopolies that yielded excellent returns."<sup>23</sup> His land-grabbing habits were notorious. Some villages were acquired by confiscating enemies of the state, such as Shaikh Khaz'al in Khuzistan. Landlords offered him "gifts" of their land, either from terror or under duress. Some were compensated with lands elsewhere in the country. Nearly all of Reza's home province of Mazandaran, and large areas of nearby Gilan and Gorgan—the rice baskets of Iran—became his private property. In this way he came to possess an estimated two thousand villages with over 235,000 inhabitants.<sup>24</sup> Though Wilber questions whether Reza was "aware of all the methods used [by zealous agents] in his name," he admits that "Finally, as one of his associates remarked, he owned so much land that he was happiest on rainy days because they were the best for the crops."<sup>25</sup>

### **I.B. State-Society Relations: Ideology and Legitimation**

At the heart of the regime's legitimation project lay a contradictory and ambivalent mixture of nationalism and Westernization. Nationalism was of course very much in the air in the international system of the 1930s, not just in its fascist variants but also in such Third World cases as the Mexican state after the revolution, and in Atatürk's Turkey. In the case of Iran Banani notes the paradox presented by this period, simultaneously one of "intense Westernization" and on the other hand xenophobia, "suspicion and resentment" towards the West.<sup>26</sup> In order to strengthen Iran against the

<sup>22</sup> Quoted by Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 118.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-45.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Graham, *Iran: The Illusion of Power* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 55. See also Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 256-258.

<sup>25</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 244. Wilber also lends credence to the ridiculous claim of Reza's son, Muhammad Reza Shah, that his father "bought land in the north in order to protect the country from Communism": *ibid.*, 245. Cf. by contrast Taqizadeh's dismissal as ambassador to France in 1935, in part caused by his reference to the shah as a "land-eating wolf": Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 121 note 17.

<sup>26</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 3.

West—particularly the long-standing encroachments of Great Britain and “Russia”—Reza borrowed heavily from the West a host of economic, political and judicial concepts and realities, from dress codes to urban architecture, judicial statutes to the educational system, secular ideologies glorifying the state and nation to modern industry and technology.

Reza’s own attitudes toward the West suggest a complex love-hate relationship. In a speech to students departing for European universities in 1930 he revealed a strange admiration for the West’s “morals”:

Our chief aim in sending you to Europe is that you should receive a moral education, for we note that Western countries have acquired a high standing as a result of their thorough moral education. Were it merely for scientific instruction it would not have been necessary to send you abroad. We could have engaged foreign instructors.<sup>27</sup>

He went on to express a peculiar hope for the effect exposure to the West might have on Iranians:

I don’t want to turn the Persian into a bad copy of a European. That is not necessary, for he has mighty traditions behind him. I mean to make out of my countrymen the best possible Persians. They need not be particularly Western or particularly Eastern. Each country has a mold of its own, which should be developed and improved until it turns out a citizen who is not a replica of anyone else, but an individual sure of himself and proud of his nationality.

... The Persian character has got to be hardened. For too long my countrymen have relied on others. I want to teach them their own value, so that they may be independent in mind and action.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time he felt that “Persia must learn to do without foreigners.”<sup>29</sup> He thus wanted to emulate the West in order to become independent and strong, a contradiction-ridden aspiration.

Katouzian coins the term “pseudo-modernism” to capture the superficiality of this effort to appropriate the achievements of the West.<sup>30</sup>

Reza Shah’s nationalism, too, differed from much earlier Iranian nationalism in that it was cast in secular rather than Islamic terms, and focused on the might and glory of the state and shah. The only variety of nationalism permitted was what Keddie designates as “official nationalism stressing national homogeneity, anticlericalism, and a modernity and strength that were read into the pre-

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 135.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-36.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 136. He told a newly appointed ambassador to France: “You are to report from Europe on other things that will be useful to Iran. But I want you to know that we are in no sense inferior to them”: *ibid.*, 176.

<sup>30</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 101ff.

Islamic past."<sup>31</sup> Ashraf terms the ruling ideology "patrimonial nationalism."<sup>32</sup> Tellingly, at the instigation of the Iranian embassy in Nazi Germany, the shah decreed in 1934 that the name of the country in the West should be "Iran" and not "Persia"; the new name "invoked ancient glory and signified the birthplace of the Aryan race."<sup>33</sup> The pre-Islamic ideal was also used as a wedge in the drive for secularism: "Although no frontal attacks were ever made on Islam, the new generation was taught to regard it as an alien faith imposed on Iran by an inferior civilization."<sup>34</sup> Thus the notion of royal glory was reinvoked to place the shah at the top of society as "king of kings," the undisputed ruler of his country.

In order to assert this autocratic self-conception, Reza Shah's state made various efforts to legitimize itself before the Iranian people, and was certainly more self-confident in this regard than the Qajars had been. The regime's ideology can be discerned as it was propagated by the "Department of Public Enlightenment" within the ministry of education:

This organization sponsored public lectures by well-known authorities and professional men on a wide range of topics, including ethics, history, hygiene, literature, social sciences, education, and "modernism, patriotism and loyalty to the sovereign and the remarkable improvements achieved in the country in recent years." According to the Ministry figures, in its first year (1937) the organization sponsored 700 public lectures attended by 181,250 persons.<sup>35</sup>

Wilber, who dates the formation of the "Society to Guide Public Opinion" to 1939, notes:

The organization formed its separate commissions for lectures, for radio, for publications and for publicity. One of the lecturers made the point that after the last great war thinkers had arrived at the conclusion that the state comes above everything, that individuals must efface themselves for the benefit of the state, and that a vigilant government must create a unified intellectual force. Apparently modelled after the examples of the Nazi and Fascist propaganda machines, the organization was designed to channel public thinking along desired lines, to acquaint the public with the activities of the government, to enlist popular support for the government, and to arouse national consciousness and

<sup>31</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 94.

<sup>32</sup> Ashraf, "Iran," 76.

<sup>33</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 143, referring to a government circular explaining the name change.

<sup>34</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 47. Though Elwell-Sutton euphemistically refers to Reza as "a Moslem of average piety," it is abundantly clear that he lacked any real personal piety or belief in Islam: see L. P. Elwell-Sutton, "Reza Shah the Great: Founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty," pp. 1-50 in Lenczowski, editor, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, 39, as against Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 246.

<sup>35</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 106.

pride.<sup>36</sup>

The regime also promoted sports fairly heavily. This involved physical education as part of the school curriculum, and efforts "to revive and popularize ancient traditional sports, such as riding, wrestling, and polo."<sup>37</sup> Even boy scouting, introduced in Iran in 1925, was made to serve the legitimization needs of the autocratic state:

In 1939 scouting was made compulsory for all school boys from the fifth through the ninth grades. At this time, however, scouting was made into a paramilitary movement with much emphasis upon drill and physical fitness. The Boy Scout creed of preparedness was made subsidiary to worship of God, King, and Country. In all the propaganda and indoctrination, however, God was the nearly ignored member of this trinity.<sup>38</sup>

As mentioned above, the educational system as a whole was geared to inculcate secularism, as well as nationalism and the glories of the Iranian imperial state.

How deeply did the regime's attempt to secure its own legitimization touch Iranian society? The reforms of Reza Shah and the claims of his state were aimed primarily at winning the hearts and minds of the urban population, whose several components were at best split in their approval of him. Peasant society was largely unaffected in this period, while the tribes were brutally and forcibly made to settle. Reza Shah's state ultimately reposed on force, and in this respect, while his centralization and economic development policies evoked the Safavid period, the lack of deep legitimization and the military underpinning of the new Pahlavi state also hearkened back to the harsh reign of Nadir Shah.<sup>39</sup> The question of civil society's reaction to the legitimization claims of Reza's state can only be fully answered after we have considered the economic shape of society and come to the question of the crushing of all social movements in this period.

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<sup>36</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 189. Katouzian refers to this society as "led by spineless and demoralised intellectuals": *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 123.

<sup>37</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 107.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Wilber quotes approvingly the shah's statement that "Force makes right." Reza's coming to power through a coup, his reliance on the army as an instrument of state power, the emphasis on the glory of "Iran" at the expense of the population, and his anti-ulama campaigns all remind one of Nadir Shah's reign from 1736 to 1747. This despite Reza's reaction when someone suggested the comparison to Nadir: "What? That bandit...": Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 237, and 249 for the quote that "Force makes right."

## II. Economy and Class Structure

The 1930s were the key transitional era between the pre-capitalist dependent development of the Qajar period and the capitalist dependent development of the post-World War 2 period. The nature and extent of the economic and class changes in Iran's social structure is thus a matter of considerable importance, on which various observers have taken rather different positions.<sup>40</sup> This chapter addresses these issues and debates through the prism of our concept of dependent development: section II will sketch in one side of this by analyzing the class structure empirically and in modes of production terms, while section III will document the world-systemic constraints placed on Iran's growth—the two sections taken together indicate the parameters of this transitional phase of dependent development by exploring its internal and external possibilities and limits. Despite the problem of finding wholly reliable data for this period,<sup>41</sup> there yet exist enough good historiographic materials for our purpose here, namely, the mapping of Iranian class structure in the interwar period.

### II.A. Demographic Overview

Population data indicate steady overall growth with some significant internal shifts as well. The total population of Iran, which we estimated at around ten million people between 1900 and 1914, grew by almost 50 percent, to 14.6 million in 1940. The compound rate of population growth, which due to war and famine had been only 0.08 percent a year for 1900-1926, increased considerably to 1.50 percent annually for 1926-1940.<sup>42</sup>

By sector there were some dramatic shifts. In 1900 the population was 20.9 percent urban (2.07 million people), 25.1 percent tribal (2.47 million), and 54.0 percent peasant (5.32 million). In

<sup>40</sup> For example, the Marxist Fred Halliday, after tracing the contours of the socioeconomic system up to 1900, claims that "This pattern changed little up to the 1940s....," while Keddie judges that "A breakthrough had been made toward economic growth," and Upton writes of "rapid and extensive development": see Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, 14; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 111; and Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 60.

<sup>41</sup> Banani notes that "Apart from official records such as the record of parliamentary legislation, contemporary records for the reign of Reza Shah are scanty and inadequate, in part owing to government censorship. In the 1940's, by contrast, a great many books were written about the Reza Shah period; unhappily, few of them are reliable": *The Modernization of Iran*, vii. Upton comments on the use of statistics by the regime "as a propaganda medium to illustrate alleged tangible progress": *The History of Modern Iran*, 53.

<sup>42</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 25-28.

1940 we have estimates of 22.0 percent urban (3.20 million), only 6.9 percent tribal (about one million), and some 71.1 percent peasant (10.35 million).<sup>43</sup> This reflects the devastating degree of sedentarization and semi-settlement of the tribal sector, to be discussed below. Other data on the labor force suggest a fall for the agricultural sector from 90 percent of the total population in 1906 to 85 percent in 1926 to 75 percent in 1946, though the number of agricultural workers grew in absolute terms from 3,431,000 to 3,828,000.<sup>44</sup>

Stimulated by military conscription, factory production and the huge railroad projects, the urban population grew at 2.30 percent a year from 1935 to 1940, compared with only 1.30 percent in the rural sector. Six cities boasted populations of 100,000 or more by 1940, according to various estimates. Tehran grew from 200,000 in 1920 to 540,000 in 1939; Isfahan from 80,000 in 1900 to 250,000 in 1939; Mashhad from 70,000 in 1914 to 200,000 in 1939; and Shiraz from 30,000 in 1914 to 200,000 in 1939. Iran's second city, Tabriz, was virtually stagnant in population terms, at 200-300,000 from 1900 to 1940, while Abadan, the oil industry's terminus which had not existed in 1900, reached 100,000 in 1939.<sup>45</sup> Iran was becoming somewhat more urban and industrial at the end of our period, but still retained a vast majority of its population on the land. We now turn to the class structure within each sector, beginning with this agrarian majority.

## II.B. Rural Modes of Production

This section will explore the economy and class structure of rural Iran, in which, as we shall see, the two long-standing modes of production—the peasant crop-sharing and the pastoral-nomadic—continued to operate, the former largely intact, but the latter entering a serious crisis due to state policy.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 31.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. See also Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Population estimates for these cities, which vary widely for Tabriz and Isfahan, can be found in Table 4.13 of Chapter Four for the beginning points, and Issawi, *EHI*, 26-27, and Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 79, for the end points.

### II.B.1. The Peasant Crop-Sharing Mode of Production

**Types of landownership and surplus extraction.** The principal types of landholding that we identified for the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries in Chapters Two and Four persisted in the 1925-1941 period, but their relative importance shifted decisively in favor of large privately-owned estates. A survey of various estimates from the 1930s and 1940s suggests the following rough proportions: 10 percent state lands, 10 to 25 percent vaqfs, 5 to 15 percent small-holdings and 50 to 80 percent large estates.<sup>46</sup> Many of the state lands were sold off as unprofitable, including some of the best properties around Tehran and Azarbaijan, still leaving a good amount in less fertile Sistan, Khuzistan and elsewhere (it will be recalled that Reza Shah accumulated a great deal of land, some of which undoubtedly came from among these state properties). The religiously-endowed vaqf category remained important, but the state made various encroachments on it by taking partial control over its administration, culminating in a 1941 bill (repealed in 1942) that would have authorized sales of vaqf lands, against all precedent. Small-holdings by peasant-owners, usually on poor terrain, were not widespread, and were further eroded by sale to larger landowners and division among heirs.

The key development in this period was the consolidation and growth of large, absentee-owned estates. Reza Shah set the precedent for this by his massive acquisitions through confiscation and purchase. Privatization was given impetus by laws requiring the registration of all lands, which held that de facto possession for thirty years conveyed ownership rights, thus legitimizing expropriations from the Qajar period. Landlords used their power in the courts to register much land to which they held dubious title. Large landowners would own at least one whole village outright, and to own several dozen was not uncommon. Mahdi claims that just 37 families owned 20,000 villages in 1941. A 1949 survey of 1,300 villages in the Tehran area showed that five percent of the landlords owned 83 percent of the land, while 85 percent of the rural population was either landless (60

<sup>46</sup> See the estimates in Gideon Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem in Iran," pp. 181-196 in *Middle East Journal*, volume 5, number 2 (Spring 1951), 185; Mahdi, "The Iranian Social Formation," 361; Nikki Keddie, "Stratification, Social Control, and Capitalism in Iranian Villages: Before and After Land Reform," pp. 158-205 in Keddie, *Iran: Religion, Politics and Society*, 169, citing Karim Sanjabi, *Essai sur l'économie rural et le régime agraire de la Perse* (Paris: Domant-Montchrestien, 1934), 138; Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 1-2; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 103; "Agricultural and Industrial Activity and Manpower in Iran," pp. 550-562 in *International Labour Review*, volume LIX (January-June 1949), 551.

percent) or owned less than one hectare (25 percent).<sup>47</sup> Large landlords, the state and vaqf administrators all commonly leased much or all of their land to intermediaries, often merchants, on short terms, who then collected the owner's share for themselves and paid a rent to the owner. All of these types of land, then, were essentially run on the model of the large estate.

The predominant mode of production in agriculture continued to be the peasant crop-sharing mode theorized in Chapter Two. Lambton found sharecropping the most common form of relation between peasant and landlord, as did Sanjabi, whose 1934 study observed its prevalence on the land of large and middle landowners.<sup>48</sup> Sharecropping (*muzara'eh*) was defined in the civil code of the 1930s as "a contract in virtue of which one of the two parties [known as the *muzāri'*], gives to the other [who is known as the *'āmil*] a piece of land for a specified time so that he should cultivate it and divide the proceeds."<sup>49</sup> The code did not stipulate any particular division of shares, and "contracts" were generally of the customary verbal type. The actual share taken by the landlord varied widely, as table 6.1 indicates, both between and within regions, due to local custom, type of crop, and which party provided water, animal power, fertilizer, tools and seed. On the whole landlords probably took one-third to one-half of the total crop.<sup>50</sup> As we shall see this does not mean that individual peasants kept one-half to two-thirds of the remainder, for it was often subdivided among several tenants and various other shares were given to people who provided services in the village. Sharecropping peasants had certain customary rights to cultivate but in practice often lacked true security of tenure. Though evictions might not be common due to the strength of tradition and the relative scarcity of labor in many places, around large cities the opposite prevailed, with very few openings for peasants to become sharecroppers.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Mahdi, "The Iranian Social Formation," 359, 357 citing M. Agah, "Some Aspects of Economic Development in Modern Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University (1958), 171; Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem," 185. For trends on the various types of landownership and the point on leasing which follows, I have drawn on Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 114, 121, 168-69 note 4, 169 note 7, 170 note 35; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 200; Keddie, "Stratification, Social Control and Capitalism," 167-69; "Agricultural and Industrial Activity," 552; and Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 232-78 *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> Sanjabi, *Essai sur l'économie rural*, 143-162, cited by Keddie, "Stratification, Social Control and Capitalism," 169; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 295, 306.

<sup>49</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 206, 402-4.

<sup>50</sup> Based on Table 6.1, and other estimates in Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 123; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 104; and Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem," 188.

<sup>51</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 294-305.

Table 6.1  
Landlords' Share of the Crop, Reza Shah Era

Locale	Irrigated Wheat	Unirrigated Wheat *	Summer Crops/Vegetables
Arak	1/3 to 2/3	1/5	same as winter
Isfahan	2/3		1/2
Burujird	3/5		
Khurasan	3/10 to 3/4	1/10	1/2
Kirmanshah	1/3		
Azarbaijan	1/3 to 2/5	1/5 to 1/3	same as winter
Kurdistan	1/5 to 1/2	1/5	1/3 or same as winter
Bakhtiari lands	1/4 to 1/3	1/4	same as winter
Fars	1/3 to 2/3	1/10 to 1/5	1/2
Kirman	2/3 to 4/5		3/4 to 4/5
Birjand	2/3 to 3/4		2/3 to 3/4
Baluchistan	2/5 to 3/5		1/2
Sistan	3/5 to 2/3		
Khuzistan	1/10 to 1/2		1/4 to 1/2
Qum/Kashan/Tehran	4/5		1/3 to 1/2
Yazd	1/2		1/2

Source: Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 308-18.

\*Seeds and draft animals provided by the peasant.

The commercialization of agriculture, already a well-established trend under the Qajars as we saw in Chapter Four, did not accelerate to any appreciable degree in the 1930s, judging from the available data. In a few places, notably in the north and occasionally elsewhere, peasants were not sharecroppers but paid a fixed rent to the landlord. This was paid (as in the case of sharecropping for that matter) partly in cash and partly in kind. Landlords however preferred sharecropping to renting out land at a fixed rate since the older method allowed them to take a larger portion of the surplus generally, and a share of any increased production in good years.<sup>52</sup> A shift toward capitalist relations can also be observed at the level of the middleman in the agrarian system who paid the landlord a cash rent in order to take the landlord's share of the crop from the peasant. Monetary relations—which are not in themselves constitutive of the capitalist mode of production—spread both upwards in the form of the land tax paid by law after 1932 in cash by the landlords, and to a lesser

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 306, 320-23; Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 12, citing Sanjabi's 1934 study.

extent downwards as money came to be somewhat more common at the level of village transactions such as sale of surplus crops and loan-taking and -making. Another hybrid form of exploitation could be found in some absentee villages where the landlord might not sharecrop the whole village but used "hired labor" to work part of it, paying this *labor* in kind.<sup>53</sup>

Export and commercialized agriculture likewise continued to exist, but there is little sign that these forms deepened significantly beyond the levels of Qajar times. The drive to produce locally some of the vast quantities of sugar consumed in Iran led to a switch to beet crops around the refineries, but peasants seem to have found this a questionable improvement in their lot as it led to increased supervision and the indebtedness a money economy usually brought.<sup>54</sup> Between 1925 and 1939 annual production of wheat grew from 1,120,000 to 1,870,000 metric tons (up 67 percent); of barley from 580,000 to 790,000 tons (up 36 percent); of rice from 270,000 to 390,000 tons (up 44 percent); of cotton from 20,000 to 38,000 tons (up 90 percent); and of tobacco from 7,000 to 15,000 tons (up 114 percent).<sup>55</sup> Silk, cotton, tea and tobacco were sold on the world market; of the major subsistence crops one estimate for the late 1940s is that two percent of production was exported.<sup>56</sup> One major cash crop—opium—which had accounted for 10-15 percent of Iran's visible exports in the 1920s and 30 percent of the world's opium, was made a government monopoly in 1928. As addiction grew, the state prohibited or restricted its cultivation after 1934 and output declined by two-thirds, costing 700 million rials in revenues.<sup>57</sup> Other cash crops were supposed to replace it, but as the government paid minimal attention to agriculture, no real export boom occurred. We may thus conclude that while there were a few signs of capitalist agriculture at the level of the world-market and of the middlemen domestically, Iran's settled agriculture remained dominated by the peasant crop-sharing mode of production.

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<sup>53</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 273-74; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 115; Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 70.

<sup>54</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 140.

<sup>55</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 134 table 1.

<sup>56</sup> Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem," 183.

<sup>57</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 265-66; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 132.

**Landlords and peasants.** Iran's landlord class underwent some changes in its composition and power vis-a-vis the state, but on the whole remained intact in the 1930s and continued in its strong position vis-a-vis the peasantry. The composition of this class did change somewhat, as certain older landed families and tribal khans lost estates, while merchants, contractors, military officers and bureaucrats, as well as Reza Shah himself, all acquired land. This partial circulation of incumbents was not in itself an unusual development after the rise of a new dynasty. Thus the shah limited the national political power of some of the oldest "aristocratic" landed families, driving a number of them out of public life. But he also allowed certain families to continue in office, married twice into the Qajar family himself, and became the largest landowner in Iran. Abrahamian observes that 37 of the 50 cabinet members from 1925 to 1941 "had been born into titled and aristocratic families."<sup>58</sup> Landlords also made up a large portion of the majlis deputies. What was new was the diminution of landlord political authority generally, as bemoaned by a landlord in the Maragheh area: "Before Reza Shah, everybody was a king. But after Reza Shah came to power, he controlled all of us."<sup>59</sup> Likewise, in Shiraz, they used to say of the leading local family, "Before Reza Shah, Qavam was shah here."<sup>60</sup> Abolishing their aristocratic titles, Reza Shah brought the landed elite clearly to a level below himself in terms of political authority.<sup>61</sup>

Though much landed resentment of Reza Shah undoubtedly remained, accommodation and adaptation were the order of the day. If their political power was somewhat circumscribed, their wealth was left largely intact. There was no land reform on the shah's agenda. In the cases of both Maragheh and Shiraz mentioned above the families in question remained part of the local elite. Many landlords expanded their holdings and influence in their regions. The tax burden was not significantly increased. While the profits to be made in agriculture started to lag behind those

<sup>58</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 150.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, "The Changing Status and Composition of an Iranian Provincial Elite," pp. 269-288 in Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran. The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 271; see also 281, 284.

<sup>60</sup> Told by older Shirazis in the 1970s to William R. Royce, "The Shirazi Provincial Elite: Status Maintenance and Change," pp. 289-300 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 293; see also 294-95.

<sup>61</sup> For these changes in landlord composition, political power and status I have drawn on Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 252-53; Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 330; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 149-50; Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 55-56; and Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 259.

possible in the urban sector they continued to run at 10-15 percent a year.<sup>62</sup> In the late 1940s Hadary made the rough estimate of an annual income of \$2,300 per landlord family, some ten times that of his estimate for peasant incomes, and undoubtedly many times lower than the income of the larger landlords.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, on their own estates landlord power and authority may have undergone some alteration, but remained great. Though Lambton judges that since the Constitutional Revolution, "the status of the large landed proprietor [had been altered] from that of a petty territorial prince to that of an ordinary landowner," Lyle Hayden's sketch of a typical village on the central plateau suggests that this still entailed great power: "The owner has absolute control of the business affairs of the land, and to a large extent controls the personal destiny of each inhabitant..."<sup>64</sup> Lambton herself concludes that the civil code was weighted in favor of the landlords, and that

Broadly speaking ... between the landowner as a class, no matter what his origin, and the peasant there is a wide gulf. In no sense is there a spirit of co-operation or a feeling of being engaged in a mutual enterprise. The attitude is on the whole, though not without exceptions, one of mutual suspicion.<sup>65</sup>

Internal control within villages was enhanced by the gradual change in this period in the status of the *kakkhuda*, the village headman. A 1935 law made *kakkhudas* responsible for law and order in their villages, and empowered them to choose which young men would be conscripted in a given year. Coupled with the fact that they were now the paid employees of the landlord and had to be approved by the county governor, this shifted the balance of power further in the landlords' favor in relations with the peasantry.<sup>66</sup>

This brings us to the situation of Iran's three and a half million peasants and their families. The typical village, if it was large enough, was somewhat differentiated internally. While the majority of the work force would be landless sharecropping tenants there would also be a group of crafts

<sup>62</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 263-64.

<sup>63</sup> Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem," 187.

<sup>64</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 260, and Lyle J. Hayden, "Living Standards in Rural Iran," pp. 140-150 in *Middle East Journal*, volume 3, number 2 (1949), 145.

<sup>65</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 263; also 208-9.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 338, 349; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 103-4; Hayden, "Living Standards in Rural Iran," 145; Hoo-glund, "The Effects of the Land Reform Program," 29-30.

and service people, including one or more blacksmiths, carpenters, bathkeepers, barbers and ulama, all of whom would receive a share of the crop for their services or be paid on each occasion.<sup>67</sup> There would likely also be a group of poor peasants who were not only landless but also without the right to sharecrop, who had to hire themselves out in times of peak work, or migrate to nearby towns in search of casual labor. In the 1940s these fully landless workers might make the equivalent of 1 to 2 shillings a day plus meals at harvest time, definitely not enough to live on.<sup>68</sup> The only solution was seasonal, or sometimes permanent, migration. Peasant women made significant contributions to meager family incomes by weaving, collecting the chaff in the fields after the harvest, and in some places working in the fields, such as on the rice plantations of the Caspian and as hired labor at harvest time, as, for example in Kirman where they received one-half the already low pay of casual male labor.<sup>69</sup>

Peasant incomes were at the subsistence level or below in the 1930s. The state turned the terms of trade against the rural population by keeping grain prices low for the urban sector.<sup>70</sup> Data on sharecropping incomes suggests they were as low as \$100-200 a year or less, and certainly these varied from region to region and even within villages.<sup>71</sup> Lambton gives several examples of what the peasants kept of their crop. In one from the Tehran area, four cultivators in a work team produced 100 loads of wheat, and after distribution of shares to the landowner (47.5 loads), for seed (7.5-10 loads), for the blacksmith, bathkeeper, ulama and field guard (8 loads in all), and to the owner of the oxen (17-18.5 loads) each peasant was left with about 4.5 loads of wheat (1300 kilograms). This share was "clearly insufficient to support him and his family unless supplemented from other sources."<sup>72</sup> In the fertile rice regions of the Caspian the peasant fared no better: "... in order

<sup>67</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 344-48.

<sup>68</sup> See *ibid.*, 374-84, for examples.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 277, 361-62, 375; Hayden, "Living Standards in Rural Iran," 144; Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 66.

<sup>70</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 132. There is some debate on this point. Issawi holds that "farmers did benefit from price support and credit," but Keddie notes that in the depression prices for agricultural goods fell more than for manufactured goods: Charles Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975: Fifty Years of Economic Development," pp. 129-166 in Lenczowski, editor, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, 132; Keddie, "Stratification, Social Control and Capitalism," 171, based on Bank Melli, *Bulletin* (March 1934), 2-4.

<sup>71</sup> For some estimates see Hayden, "Living Standards in Rural Iran," 187; and Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 374.

<sup>72</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 374-75.

to maintain himself and his family at a minimum standard he is forced to supplement his agricultural earnings by labour on the roads, portage, and other unskilled manual labour."<sup>73</sup> Other sources of income and consumption were the weaving of women, small garden plots or ownership of a few animals. Even the small-holder who owned a bit of property could live below the margin of self-sufficiency unless income was derived from other activities. And on the debit side certain dues and obligations continued to be owed the landlord; though fewer and less widespread than in former times, these might include a few days of free labor each year, New Year's presents, and the produce of flocks. The state moreover could now seriously undermine one's source of livelihood by requiring military service at inopportune times. In the end, inevitable shortfalls had to be made good by recourse to moneylenders.<sup>74</sup>

The overall standard of living of Iran's peasantry was not very satisfactory, to say the least. Many observers held it to have deteriorated by the end of Reza Shah's reign.<sup>75</sup> Even if the standard of living remained stationary, this meant great hardship. Diet in a typical peasant household might be "breakfast: bread and tea; lunch: bread and *mawst* (yoghurt); dinner: bread, mawst, and tea."<sup>76</sup> As Keddie concludes, "peasants were usually hungry."<sup>77</sup> A 1950s survey by the United Nations found daily caloric intake in Iran at under 1800 calories per adult, "the lowest in the entire impoverished Middle East."<sup>78</sup> Health conditions were equally abysmal: in the late 1940s one study found "Infant mortality is estimated at 50 percent; rural life expectancy is about 27 years; diseases affect the majority of the people; and most villages are without any kind of health facilities."<sup>79</sup> Eighty-two percent of the peasants in one village had malaria in the late 1940s.<sup>80</sup> Water was usually

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 376-78.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 277, 330-36, 350-58, 368, 380-83. One (admittedly extreme!) example of an agricultural loan is recorded of a merchant from Kashan who lent 130 rials (15 shillings, 3 pence) to a peasant, and after ten years of compound interest the total due was 70,000 rials (412 pounds sterling).

<sup>75</sup> See Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 154; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 123-24; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 266; and Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 394.

<sup>76</sup> Hayden, "Living Standards in Rural Iran," 142. See also Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 66, and Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 388-89.

<sup>77</sup> Keddie, "Stratification, Social Control, and Capitalism," 170.

<sup>78</sup> Cited by Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 2. The minimum intake required to function in Iran was calculated at something over 2000 calories by Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem," 183.

<sup>79</sup> Cited by Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 2. Life expectancy gradually increased from 25 years in 1900 to 30 years in 1950: Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 39.

<sup>80</sup> Hayden, "Living Standards in Rural Iran," 145; also 144.

contaminated. Obviously, to become sick was a serious affair. Housing, while simple and overcrowded, was remarkably practical given the harsh environment. It could be owned by the peasant or the landlord. Schools were rarely found in villages in this period, nor could children be easily spared from agricultural and household labor. In general landlords made little or no improvements in the educational, housing or health situation of peasants.<sup>81</sup>

It is amazing that in the face of such conditions, observers wrote of the stamina and capacity for hard work, craftsmanship, intelligence and desire for education, and moral fiber of the Iranian peasantry.<sup>82</sup> In view of these conditions, moreover, and the resentment and suspicion between landlord and peasant already noted, it is difficult to credit Upton's view that "Reza Shah appears to have been generally admired by the peasants up to the end."<sup>83</sup> It would probably be more accurate to agree with Ashraf that they accepted to some degree "the legitimacy of the Shah's political domination ... based on its military power, its traditional existence and its connection with the supernatural, i.e., the conception of the Shah as the shadow of God on earth."<sup>84</sup>

**The limits of agricultural development.** Iranian agriculture in the 1930s basically seems to have kept up with population growth, but did not register any conspicuous qualitative improvements. Relative to the industrial and oil sectors its share in the gross national product declined steadily from about 80-90 percent in 1900 to about 50 percent in the 1930s. Since the agricultural work force accounted for 75 percent or more of Iran's total labor force, productivity lagged relative to the more dynamically expanding urban sector. The greater output of grains, cotton and tobacco already noted can be attributed partly to the simple expansion of land under cultivation from four million hectares in the mid-1920s to five million in 1933-46. Still, output of the basic grains rose 52.5 percent for 1925-39, compared with 25 percent for land under cultivation and 22 percent in population, so some improvement did occur, and most importantly, output exceeded population growth by a factor of two or more. Iran in 1940 was still fundamentally self-sufficient in food (leaving aside sugar and tea,

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 146; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 263, 303, 387, 390-91.

<sup>82</sup> See Hayden, "Living Standards in Rural Iran," 146, and Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem," 196.

<sup>83</sup> Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 70.

<sup>84</sup> Ashraf, "Iran," 77.

which were imported in great quantities even as domestic production rose): up to 50,000 tons of rice and 25-50,000 tons of grain were actually exported in certain years. Wheat nevertheless was sometimes imported from abroad in the 1930s.<sup>85</sup>

Three main reasons can be adduced for the limited development of agriculture in this period. First, agricultural techniques did not change at all. There was virtually no mechanization of agriculture, drilling of deep wells or systematic introduction of new seed varieties, except for a few scattered experiments on Reza Shah's properties or by the minority of progressively-minded landowners. Reaping and threshing continued to be done by hand.<sup>86</sup> Secondly, the government paid little attention to the development of agriculture. There was no land reform outside of a mismanaged and corrupt attempt on crown lands in distant Sistan. In fact the opposite of a land reform occurred to the extent that the power and security of large landlords was stabilized and enhanced. Agricultural policy in general was virtually ignored, and the budget allocated to this vast sector of the national economy was miniscule. Government pricing policies actually worked against agricultural expansion.<sup>87</sup> The failure to address the problem of land reform brings us to the third factor—the stagnationist tendencies within the crop-sharing mode of production itself. The mechanics of sharecropping discouraged production or productivity increases on all sides. Peasants feared that bringing in a larger crop would only lead to greater demands on them; a larger than normal output went mostly to the landlord in any case who took the greater share of the crop. By the same token, the landlord already received such a large share that there was little incentive to invest in land improvements. Nor would the middle man make any investments on property leased for a few years at most. Indeed the short terms of the leases only put added pressure on the soil to produce each year as much as possible, leading to overexploitation and exhaustion. So the landlord was not tempted to change to a

<sup>85</sup> On these trends see Wilfred Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung und Konzentration in Iran* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1977), 3; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 59-60, 131, 134-36; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia. Persia. Part II," pp. 382-431 in *Central Asian Review*, volume IV, number 4 (1956), 409; and Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 265.

<sup>86</sup> On agricultural techniques see Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 141-43; Hadary, "The Agrarian Reform Problem," 183; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 125-27; and Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 361.

<sup>87</sup> See Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 122; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 265; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 246-53; and Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 21. Keddie argues that "The growth of landlordism and declining agricultural standards were the clay feet of the whole modernization program of Reza Shah": "Stratification, Social Control and Capitalism," 172.

fixed rent system, the middleman was in no position to introduce capitalist production relations, and the peasant had no incentive to produce more.<sup>88</sup> The result of these tendencies in technique, state policy and extraction of surplus was to leave the existing system more or less intact, which meant a building pressure on the agrarian sector as population began to grow steadily. The continuation of these trends after the war would have major consequences for Iran's social structure.

## **II.B.2. The Pastoral-Nomadic Mode of Production**

**State policy and its impact.** Iran's tribal sector was severely affected by state policy in the Reza Shah period. His experience of tribal pacification campaigns after 1921 had imbued the shah with the attitude that tribespeople were "uncouth, unproductive, unruly, and uneducated savages who have been left behind in the primitive state of nature."<sup>89</sup> Lambton feels that such attitudes, or at least state policy based on them, had "the general support of the non-tribal element of the population of the country."<sup>90</sup> Given this climate of opinion, the full weight of the state was thrown into the battle against the tribal population, first to establish central authority once and for all in a continuation of the military campaigns of the 1920s, then to "civilize" the tribes and bring them into the modern world by a program of forced sedentarization. Qashqa'i, Arab, Lur and other revolts were quelled between 1927 and 1932. (Map 6.1 in Appendix II shows the approximate locations of some 29 ethnic groups in twentieth-century Iran.) After disarming the tribes, their migration routes were blockaded in an effort to compel them to settle and become cultivating peasants rather than pastoralists. Sometimes they were given or sold state land and seed as inducements, often in areas far from their migration routes and of limited agricultural value. Military governors were installed in tribal areas, conscription was applied to the tribesmen, and the authorities fined, imprisoned or shot those who resisted, sometimes on such pretexts as failure to observe the 1928 uniform dress code. The building of roads and railways enhanced the government's powers of surveillance and control.

<sup>88</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 154; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 123; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 244; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 234, 398.

<sup>89</sup> These are Abrahamian's words: *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 141.

<sup>90</sup> Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 285.

Settlement was accompanied by stricter collection of taxes. "Persianization" extended to language as well as dress requirements.<sup>91</sup>

The impact of these policies on the tribes varied, but was generally devastating. There was naturally resistance, but the struggle against the military, economic and administrative resources of the Pahlavi state was unequal. The Shahsevan were nearly all eventually made to settle, to become *takhtaqapi* (literally, "wooden-door," i.e. house- rather than tent-dwellers). The Lurs resisted in several uprisings and were systematically looted by the military government, which created two new towns in the midst of their territory. Earlier government moves against the powerful Bakhtiari continued: their two branches were separated, manipulated and crushed; three of their khans were executed in 1929 and three more in 1934; the offices of paramount chief (*il-khan* and *il-baig*) were abolished; and their territory was divided into two new jurisdictions ruled by civilians from Isfahan and Khuzistan. The Qashqa'i also fought back in 1929 and 1932, and had their *il-khan* transferred to Tehran where he died, possibly murdered. They were then subjected to military administration and nearly all were forced to settle, with only individual shepherds (not whole families) allowed to migrate with their herds.<sup>92</sup>

Tribal population and production declined dramatically, on the whole. Enormous loss of life is suggested by Bharier's staggering statistic that there were 2,470,000 nomads in 1900, but that by 1932, this had fallen to about one million.<sup>93</sup> Such great human losses seriously undermined the pastoral economy and supply of livestock products in the country. Production of meat, leather, hides and dairy goods all must have declined, as well as the provision of animals for transport. One

<sup>91</sup> On wars, settlement and government policy, see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 128-29; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 146; Beck, "Tribes and the State"; and Paul Barker, "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i: A Paradox of Local Initiative and State Control," pp. 139-157 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 143.

<sup>92</sup> On these particular tribes see Tapper, "Black Sheep, White Sheep and Red Heads," 74; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 128; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 418, based on S. I. Bruk, "The ethnic composition of the countries of Western Asia" (in Russian), in *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, number 2 (1955); Gene R. Garthwaite, *Khans and shahs. A documentary analysis of the Bakhtiari in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 139; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 141-42; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 61; and Lois Beck, "Economic Transformations Among Qashqa'i Nomads, 1962-1978," pp. 99-122 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 118. Barker describes the resourcefulness of the Bakhtiari resistance: "Sometimes by daring night passage through bottlenecks, and sometimes by bribing soldiers with a percentage of their flocks, some tribes-people managed to keep migrating, though in increasing poverty": "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i," 143.

<sup>93</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 31. Lambton writes generally of "heavy losses in livestock, the impoverishment of the tribes, and a diminution of their numbers": *Landlord and Peasant*, 286.

estimate shows the number of sheep in Iran down from 15,200,000 in 1930-34 to 14,000,000 in 1935-39, with those of mules and donkeys remaining about the same. Another telling statistic is the figure for sheep per 100 inhabitants in the Middle East in 1949: Iran's 70 compares very poorly with Iraq's 136, Turkey's 124 or Afghanistan's 123.<sup>94</sup> Forced settlement meant that the same numbers of animals could no longer be maintained, while the poor quality of the lands the tribes received and the lack of support in making what would have been under any circumstances an inconceivably difficult transition to a new mode of life, condemned the new tribal "peasantry" to the most marginal settled existence.

**Khans and tribespeople.** The two main constituent classes of the pastoral nomadic mode, khans and ordinary tribespeople, both felt the effects of the devastation of their ways of life, but naturally continued to be far separated in their relationship to the surplus produced, and in their life chances generally. Some tribal leaders paid dearly for resisting the state's authority, by banishment, house arrest in Tehran, confiscation of property, imprisonment, or ultimately, with their lives. This last was the fate of, among others, the Qashqa'i chief Saulat al-Daula, six Bakhtiari leaders including the minister of war Sardar As'ad, and Boir Ahmadi and Mamassani khans. Other leaders fared better and were brought into line with more conciliatory approaches or outright cooptation. The Qavam family of Shiraz received state lands in distant Khurasan and Mazandaran in exchange for the local lands it forfeited. They and many others retained considerable wealth, though now as much under the heading of large landlords as under that of tribal khans. Those who were kept hostage at Tehran could live fairly comfortably, and their metamorphosis into part of the settled elite was cemented by the education of their children in Tehran or even in Europe.<sup>95</sup>

At the opposite end of this class relation were the members of the tribes, the (till then) migrating pastoralist population. Their condition without doubt deteriorated during the Reza Shah period.

<sup>94</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 97; Bharier, *Economic Development In Iran*, 135 table 2: "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 409. Different livestock figures can be found in "Agricultural and Industrial Activity," 550 note 3.

<sup>95</sup> On the khans see Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 61; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 146, 162, 171 note 11; Garthwaite, *Khans and shahs*, 139; Barker, "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i," 143; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 150-51; Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 152; and Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 128.

Forced to settle, or at best with their migration routes disrupted and more tightly controlled, their standard of living suffered enormously. Impoverishment was the natural and obvious result of this experience. In settled communities their diet, housing and health conditions could not have been better than those of the peasantry discussed already, and, given the radical break with their previous way of life, must often have been not only worse than they had enjoyed under pastoralism, but worse than the conditions of the long-standing peasant population. Conscription, disarming, increased taxes, systematic and arbitrary harassment by the military authorities in their areas all took a toll. Once settled, tribespeople tended to be exploited by their khans and the government worse than other peasants—a cruel loss of livelihood, status and well-being was the result. Tribal women, as we have noted for earlier periods, continued to perform more labor and (as a result) possessed more personal freedom than women in the urban or agricultural sectors, though as migration gave way to farming, they may have come somewhat closer to the norms of peasant society.<sup>96</sup>

The hard experience of the coercive might of the state undoubtedly made its mark on tribal attitudes and political consciousness. The Pahlavi state did not rule the tribes with strong legitimization claims but rather by armed force or its threat. Repression politicized many tribes to see their own identities in terms of their migration routes, costumes and culture generally, and language. In a sense strong ethnic minorities really coalesced in this period in the resistance to Persianization.<sup>97</sup> Exposure to industrial and urban settings (such as that of the Bakhtiari who worked in the oil fields) also led in some cases to the spread of new political ideas of freedom and equality which played a role in certain uprisings we shall examine in section IV. The thin veneer of the success of the government's policy was exposed after 1941 when many tribespeople resumed their migrations in the new political space opened by the abdication of the shah, a development that belongs to Chapter Seven. But the toll that had been exacted in the 1930s was, unfortunately, extremely high.

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<sup>96</sup> On tribespeople's conditions of life, see Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 154; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 67; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 61-62; Keddie, "Stratification, Social Control, and Capitalism," 170; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 97. Lambton provides specific examples of exploitation by their khans among Qashqa'is, Kurds and Baluchis: *Landlord and Peasant*, 286-94.

<sup>97</sup> This point is suggested by Beck's lecture on "Tribes and the State."

## II.C. Urban Modes of Production

Iran's urban modes of production remained two—the petty-commodity in the craft sector, and the capitalist in the industrial sector—but the capitalist mode now began to expand greatly both in absolute terms and relative to artisanal production. After looking at each of these modes of production and their constituent social classes, we will examine several groups and classes that now cut across both modes, notably the intelligentsia, the ulama, marginal urban classes, women and minorities.

### II.C.1. The Capitalist Mode of Production

**State investments in infrastructure.** In the 1930s the state took the lead in extending the development of capitalism in Iran (though as we shall see the private sector played more than a small part in this process). A major portion of the state's development resources went into infrastructural projects of which the most spectacular was the railroad. The 850-mile long Trans-Iranian Railroad (see Map 6.2 in Appendix II) was built between 1927 and 1938 at a cost of about \$150 million for a single-track line and another \$100 million for equipment. Though a major coup for the state's image, it was a wasteful, costly project with numerous drawbacks—it proved inflationary, served minimal economic purposes, bypassed most important cities and lowered the living standard as it was paid for by a regressive tax on tea and sugar. At 35,000 pounds sterling per mile, to build its equivalent in motor vehicle roads would have cost about 1-1.5 percent as much. Its main practical function seems to have been to improve internal security south of Tehran by making the military more mobile; north of Tehran it facilitated trade toward the Soviet Union, not coincidentally making Reza's properties in Mazandaran more valuable. An east-west line to link Tabriz and Mashhad via Tehran was started, but interrupted by World War 2 and not completed until the 1950s. The enormous resources poured into the railroad undercut other developmental projects in industry and agriculture.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> On the railroad see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 134, 171 note 83; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 125, 185; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 100; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 115-16, 132; Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 131-32; M. Reza Behnam, *Cultural Foundations of Iranian Politics* (Salt

Other infrastructural developments occurred as well. Some 20,000 kilometers of roads were built (see Map 6.2), partly in connection with the railway, partly again to facilitate travel to the shah's estates, but partly also for useful purposes. Virtually none of these were asphalted but many were good enough for motor vehicles, whose numbers (all imports) reached 25,000 by 1941. Motor travel cut the cost of transporting goods from the Gulf to Tehran by four times, and reduced the time required from 1-2 months to 1-2 weeks, or even three days. Water transport remained minimal in this period, but air transport was inaugurated by the German Junkers firm, then Lufthansa, and finally Iran with its own air service between Baghdad and Tehran. Other improvements included the installation of electric power in all major cities by 1936 (though Iran's use remained low compared with Turkey, Lebanon and Morocco), and additions to the housing stock with considerable expenditures on public buildings. Water systems remained unimproved, however, outside the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's enclave, and piped water first came to Tehran only in the 1950s. A final area of notable expansion was in communications: the postal, telegraphic and telephone services all grew considerably (they were among the few profitable government operations); and by 1935 much of the population was within range of radio broadcasting (at least theoretically).<sup>99</sup>

The result of these investments was that Iran's infrastructure for capitalist and industrial development was markedly enhanced between 1925 and 1941, though still remaining at a low level with respect to other Middle Eastern countries, and with much capital used unwisely to build the railroad.

**State and private sector industrialization.** While we have demonstrated in Chapter Four that factory production was inaugurated in Iran in the pre-World War I period, it is fair to say that

Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986), 29. Bharier calls it "one of the classic examples of conspicuous investment in a developing country.... there is no doubt that on almost any economic criterion the railway was ill-conceived": *Economic Development in Iran*, 203. Moghadam feels it did "greatly" cheapen the cost of transport: "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 217.

<sup>99</sup> On roads, motor vehicles and freight rates see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 135; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 265; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 99; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 195-98; Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 329; and Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 131. On air and water transport, Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 135-36. On electricity, Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 219. On housing and building construction, see *ibid.*, 227, 233, 235; on water systems, *ibid.*, 226; on communications, *ibid.*, 87, 214-17, and Roger M. Savory, "Social Development in Iran during the Pahlavi Era," pp. 85-128 in George Lenczowski, ed., *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, 99.

industrialization really began on a significant scale only in the 1920s and was further consolidated in the 1930s. The government played a major role in initiating this process, but private capital participated in sizable amounts too, as did mixed private-state ventures (the exact proportions will be sorted out below). One major question with respect to industrialization has to do with the issue of import-substitution: did the Iranian state conceive a strategy of import-substitution industrialization (ISI), seeking to create industries that would meet domestic consumption needs and reduce imports? While many observers have said this was so,<sup>100</sup> it would seem more accurate to conclude that the state did not *consciously* adopt such a policy, and yet to a great extent this *is* the type of industrialization that occurred, with textiles, food-processing and auxiliary industries all fitting this pattern. Actual state policies did not or could not however include such measures as protective tariffs for Iran's fledgling factories, while distorted and incorrect foreign exchange rates actually made certain imports more attractive than local products after 1936.<sup>101</sup>

There is no doubt that the government meant to promote industrialization generally, and that a great amount was accomplished in this regard, planned or not, by 1941. The number of factories grew from less than 20 in 1925 (only five larger than 50 workers) to something over 300 small and large factories (28 had more than 500 workers) by 1941.<sup>102</sup> By that date some \$260 million had been invested, about one-third by the state and over one-half from private capital. Iran's larger installations included 37 textile mills, 8 sugar refineries, 11 match factories, 8 chemical plants, 5 tea processing units, plus cement, glass, soap, tobacco, ginning, mills, sawmills, silos, electricity and other plants.<sup>103</sup> Korby's list of 105 enterprises in 1941 suggests that 21 percent were state-owned,

<sup>100</sup> Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 329; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 243, 265; "A Letter from Teheran," pp. 89-92 in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, volume XXI, part 1 (January 1934), 91; Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 58.

<sup>101</sup> Evidence against an ISI strategy is found in Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 117; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 176; and Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 137, 139, 174. Keddie feels there were high tariffs: *Roots of Revolution*, 101.

<sup>102</sup> Estimates on the number of factories in 1941 vary greatly, apparently depending on what is counted a factory: Bharier has 160 factories with more than ten workers (*Economic Development in Iran*, 173), Ashraf has 200 factories ("Historical Obstacles," 329), Floor has 230 large and small factories (*Industrialization in Iran*, 18), Abrahamian has 200 small and 146 large factories ("The Strengths and Weaknesses of the Labor Movement in Iran, 1941-1953," pp. 211-232 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 213) and Ehsan Tabari counts 382 in 1940 (Ehsan Tabari, *Jam'eh-i Iran dar Dauran-i Riza Shah* [Iranian Society in the Reza Shah Period] (Stockholm: Tudeh Publishing Center, 1356/1977), 79). For the sizes of factories, see Floor, *Labour Unions*, 59 table 4; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 181 table 4; and Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 329.

<sup>103</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 146-47; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 179 table 3; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 30-31, 33.

55 percent private (but these employed only 13.5 percent of the work force), 24 percent jointly managed by the two sectors and 1 percent foreign-owned (the oil industry, which employed 40 percent of the workers, and will be examined in section III on Iran's relations with the West below). Floor's more comprehensive lists suggest the state owned but 23 of 226 factories in 1932 and 32 of 243 in 1940.<sup>104</sup> The state's largest sector was in textiles; it was the only employer in sugar refining, tobacco and cement, the major employer in food-processing and accounted for nearly all of the metalwork industry. The private sector's biggest roles were in textiles, food-processing and chemicals, with the key area of joint state-private ventures being textiles.<sup>105</sup>

Cotton, wool and silk textiles were the largest sector, with 50-60 percent of the industrial work force and 34 of the 57 factories with over 200 workers. Subsidiary to these were 12 wool-cleaning factories and 76 cotton-ginning establishments. Labor productivity was equal to that of India, far below England and Japan, but imports of cotton cloth were reduced from 10,000 tons in 1932-33 to 5,000 tons in 1946-47, in part due to campaigns urging the wearing of local manufactures.<sup>106</sup> The second leading sector was in processing agricultural products (in the broad sense this *includes* textiles), involving eight sugar refineries, one large tobacco plant, facilities for tea, beverages, rice, preserves, meat and other food products. Sugar production rose enormously until it provided 35 percent of demand in 1945. Other industries included a highly successful cement sector, matches, soap, paper, glass and chemicals.<sup>107</sup> A small military sector was also developed, with munitions and armaments factories and equipment repair facilities. Plans were made for heavy industries in iron and steel and blast furnaces were imported from Germany but World War 2 interrupted the project. Finally, about 60 mines for salt, copper (with a refinery), coal, turquoise and alum were in operation; coal in particular was somewhat mechanized in the 1930s, but the product was of poor quality.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 60 table 6; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 45-63 annexes A and B, tabulated by me. Bharier gives the state 64 of 175 large factories in 1946: *Economic Development in Iran*, 180. The ILO suggested that of 1,400 million rials invested in industry in 1938-39, only 55 million (4 percent) was by the state, which seems far too low: "Agricultural and Industrial Activity," 553.

<sup>105</sup> Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 60 table 6.

<sup>106</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 178-80; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 139; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 130-31; "Affairs in Persia," pp. 84-88 in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, volume XV, part I (1928), 88.

<sup>107</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 176-78; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 218 table 43; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 411; "Agricultural and Industrial Activity," 553.

For all these accomplishments, Reza Shah's industrialization program had several drawbacks and limitations. First, it was both highly specialized and overconcentrated in a few places, notably Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan and a few sites in Reza's privileged area of the Caspian.<sup>109</sup> Secondly, as argued already, it was not conducted according to any well-conceived plan. A British report of 1936 commented on the shah's predilection for prestige projects:

When the shah orders a railway, a harbor or a factory, one has the feeling that he does so, not because the estimates of the experts show that it will be profitable, but simply because he feels that every respected country had a railway &c., and because it gives him an inferiority complex not to possess one also.<sup>110</sup>

Reza also interfered with the private sector at times, as exemplified by a 1938 decree that textile workers not be paid more than four rials a day, apparently because workers in his own spinning factory were leaving for higher-paying jobs at Isfahan and Shiraz.<sup>111</sup> A third area of problems had to do with costs, profits and investment. The \$260 million invested in all industries combined only equalled the amount spent on the railroad, proving that the latter project cut into Iran's developmental potential. The state sector in particular was notorious for its high production costs and low profits; indeed, practically all state factories seem to have lost money.<sup>112</sup> Finally, though Iran did make great strides compared with the Qajar period, it continued to lag well behind other Middle Eastern industrializers such as Turkey and Egypt throughout the 1930s.<sup>113</sup>

**Classes in the capitalist mode of production.** The two main classes we will discuss under this heading are Iran's growing capitalist and working classes (the intelligentsia, ulama and urban marginals will be analyzed below under the heading of "classes and groups in two modes of production"—the capitalist and petty-commodity).

<sup>108</sup> On the military, heavy industrial and mining sectors, see Alvin J. Cottrell, "Iran's Armed Forces under the Pahlavi Dynasty," pp. 389-431 in George Lenczowski, editor, *Iran Under the Pahlavis* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 393; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 141; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 35; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 151, 224; and "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 411.

<sup>109</sup> See Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, illustrations 4 and 5 at the end of the book, and Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 182 table 5.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted by Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 43 note 95.

<sup>111</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 105-6. This order however was circumscribed by the mill owners.

<sup>112</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 87, 180.

<sup>113</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 35; Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 130-33.

The capitalist class in Iran continued to be split among the state, foreign and local capital, all of which grew in this period. The state sector encompassed the managers of the state-owned industries and Reza Shah himself who owned shares in a number of companies. State managers were frequently changed and their procedures were often inefficient and corrupt.<sup>114</sup> Foreign capital, consisting mainly of the British-run oil operations and the Soviet fisheries, will be dealt with in section III below. Here we are most interested in Iran's private sector, and within it the two main components which can be discerned: owners and managers of the new industries on the one hand, and large-scale merchants and contractors on the other.

Two schools of thought exist on the new industrial bourgeoisie. One argues that it was small and insignificant vis-a-vis the state and not particularly forthcoming in starting up new factories; the other sees this group as growing by leaps and bounds.<sup>115</sup> Both positions have merit: while it is true that Iran's capitalists were more attracted to commerce than industry, and that the state had to capitalize some of the largest industrial concerns, it is also the case that by 1941 the vast majority of industrial enterprises were in the private sector. Iran's new factory owners seem to have come from among the large merchants, state bureaucrats and perhaps some landed families.<sup>116</sup> The profits to be made were quite attractive, largely because of the captive character of the domestic market, whose consumers were forced to pay high prices for low quality. By one estimate dividends in industry averaged over 22 percent a year between 1931 and 1937. After 1935 industrial profits swelled with inflation which redistributed income upwards.<sup>117</sup> Industrialists' attitudes toward the work force may be summed up as paternalistic, authoritarian and indifferent.<sup>118</sup>

Profits from trade and government contracts may have been even greater than from industry, and this spawned the second component of Iran's private sector capitalist class—the "merchants, monopolists, contractors and politician-favorites" mentioned in Millspaugh's epigraph to this

<sup>114</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 131.

<sup>115</sup> For the first position, see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 138; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 244, 264-65; Ashraf, "Iran," 79; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 53; and for the latter point of view, Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 24.

<sup>116</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 24, and *Labour Unions*, 61-62, 79-80 note 237.

<sup>117</sup> Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 25, 40, 40 note 55; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 176-77.

<sup>118</sup> See Floor, *Labour Unions*, 61-62, 112-13.

chapter, to which we may add speculators, smugglers and profiteers. The foreign trade and exchange monopolies discriminated against Iran's traditional merchant class in the bazaar in favor of a few large trading firms, mostly in Tehran, which enjoyed government connections. Small traders were forced out of business, unable to obtain import and export licenses, especially in the provinces. By 1941 there were 27 trading monopolies, and there were far more commercial than industrial corporations, with several times the capital invested. Windfall profits were made in foreign trade throughout the 1930s. Contractors in construction and building materials also profited from the creation of the railroad, state factories and other infrastructure. Another group consisted of individuals involved in smuggling and black market operations. This sector as a whole depended not only on the state (as did the industrial capitalists to a large degree), but also had ties to the foreign markets in which they bought and sold, making them a dependent, or comprador-type bourgeoisie.<sup>119</sup>

Iran's (non-craft) working class grew considerably in the 1930s, reaching, according to various estimates, from 170,000 to 260,000 people in all.<sup>120</sup> Table 6.2 breaks this down into sectors, the largest being 60,000 construction laborers, followed by 20-30,000 each in textile factories, the oil industry, wool and rice cleaning, and transportation. Other sizable categories included railwaymen, food-processing workers, dockers and fishery workers. There were perhaps 45,000 factory workers in all.<sup>121</sup> Working conditions naturally varied by sector, but the long hours, low wages and exploitation of women and children discerned for the 1920s in Chapter Four persisted. Labor legislation provided some benefits and protection but was not uniformly applied or observed. Floor considers that "in general working conditions continued to be as they were, bad."<sup>122</sup> They were likened to "slavery" by both British and American observers; at least one instance of forced recruitment of silk workers has been recorded.<sup>123</sup> Wages in textile mills were about 1.5-2 rials (8-11 cents) for a

<sup>119</sup> On this group see Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 266; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 176-77; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 102, 107; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 34 table 13; and Ashraf, "Iran," 68, 75.

<sup>120</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 147; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 27-28. The exact numbers are hard to calculate both due to the seasonal nature of some occupations, notably food-processing and construction, and the problems of statistics in this period generally.

<sup>121</sup> Table 6.2 and Tabari, *Jam'eh-i Iran dar Dauran-i Riza Shah*, 79. Abrahamian estimates 50,000 in large modern factories and 10,000 in small: *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 147.

<sup>122</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 96.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-12, 118 note 45.

Table 6.2  
Iran's (non-craft) Working Class, ca. 1940

Sector	Number of Workers
Construction	60,000
Oil industry	31,500
Textiles	25-30,000
Wool and rice cleaning	25,000
Transportation/drivers	20,000
Railways	14,500
Food-processing	8-9,500
Dockworkers	4-10,000
Fisheries	3-15,000
Building materials	5,700
Tanneries	3-5,000
Matches and electricity	1,600-4,000
Mining	3-4,000
Chemicals	3-4,000
Armaments	1,500
Metalwork	1,500
Grain silos	1,100
Printers	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>212,400-243,300</b>

Sources: Compiled from Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 27-28 tables 8, 9 and 9a, 30-31, 41 note 67; Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 60 table 6; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 147; "Agricultural and Industrial Activity," 554-56.

ten-hour day in 1934-37; this rose to 3-6 rials a day for men and 1-2 for girls in 1941. Construction labor made 2-3 rials for a 12-hour day around 1930.<sup>124</sup> A decline in real wages is quite probable: pay raises lagged behind inflation by 30-50 percent between 1920 and 1940, according to a 1941 U.S. embassy report. Floor's data on wages and food prices suggests a subsistence-level standard of living for the working class in Fars and Azarbaijan. A British commercial attaché commented in 1928 that a laborer could only buy "bread and cheese and an occasional piece of cotton cloth for his women-folk."<sup>125</sup> The U.S. embassy report found that

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 103, 105, 107. Textile wages of six pence a day in Iran compared with 63 pence in Britain, 23 in India and 14 in Japan in 1936: Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 178.

<sup>125</sup> Cited by Floor, *Labour Unions*, 111; see also 103, 108-9.

... the wage is insufficient even for food for a family and most workers have a starvation diet consisting of tea, (not white) bread, cheese and onions, with occasional greens and grapes and infrequent rice and cheap meat. It is not possible to buy adequate clothing or even to dream of luxuries such as education of the children.<sup>126</sup>

In these circumstances, and given the employers' attitudes already described, it is not surprising that working-class consciousness developed to some degree, especially in the large industrial settings of the oil fields, railroads, textiles and other factories. Though strikes were banned and the trade union movement was outlawed, labor was still not inactive as we shall see in our discussion of social movements in section IV. But both the political and economic pressures on Iran's growing working class were very great, and survival must have taken precedence over militancy under these conditions.

## II.C.2. The Petty-Commodity Mode of Production

Artisans, craftspeople and small traders suffered political and economic losses relative to the state and capitalist sector in this period. Economically the hardest impact came not from the state but from industrial production and imported manufactures. The state abolished taxes on over 230 guilds (giving some idea of the high numbers of crafts and services that still existed), and income taxes were very low (100 tomans on incomes over 40,000 tomans).<sup>127</sup> Urban development, however, laid out straight, broad streets which sometimes cut through part of the bazaar, creating opportunities for new shops to open outside of the bazaar, accessible to automobile traffic.<sup>128</sup> And insofar as the state promoted industrialization, artisanal production declined. This expansion of textiles, metalwork and other machine-produced factory articles, in conjunction with the dramatic reduction of transport costs after 1930, was the main source of craft decline. Handicraft tool-making, for example, remained important in that by one estimate it accounted for 14 percent of gross domestic fixed capital formation in the 1930s, but this had been as high as 35 percent from 1900 to 1925.<sup>129</sup> Estimates of the craft sector vary enormously, from Abdullaev's very low 10,000 to Floor's 250,000.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 110.

<sup>127</sup> Floor, "The Guilds in Iran," 109-10.

<sup>128</sup> Michael E. Bonine, "Shops and Shopkeepers: Dynamics of an Iranian Provincial Bazaar," pp. 233-258 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 235-36.

<sup>129</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 143.

Bharier counts 5,000 small workshops employing 15,000 workers in Tehran alone in 1928, and 15,000 "small factories" (workshops?) in the country in 1947; he thinks a "substantial decline" occurred.<sup>131</sup> Another estimate is that Tehran had 15,298 workshops in 1927, with 31,970 workers (of which 13,266 were master craftsmen, 14,201 workers and 4,303 apprentices) in 202 different trades.<sup>132</sup> In a total population of 210,000, with four persons per family this statistic implies that 60 percent of Tehran's population was in the guild sector. If Tehran had over 30,000 craft workers, the total figure of 250,000 may be about right for all of Iran. In any case progressive decline set in during the 1930s. Artisans' wages were estimated at 5 to 10 krans a day ca. 1928, some 2-3 times higher than factory labor. A slightly more varied and nutritious diet than for the rural population may be inferred as well.<sup>133</sup>

One group in the craft sector (but outside the guild structure) that was more intensely exploited than the rest were the 60,000 to 250,000 people engaged in making carpets and other handloomed textiles.<sup>134</sup> The desperate conditions of work and pay which we saw obtaining in Kirman and elsewhere in the 1920s did not improve markedly in this period. Worldwide depression cut demand after 1929, which impoverished this export-oriented sector even more than the rest of the crafts. Child and female labor continued to be prevalent. The work force in general was described in 1928 as "a collection of famished, pale, emaciated and deformed beings."<sup>135</sup> Wages were as low as 1-3 krans a day in the 1920s, and two rials (the new rial being equal in value to the old kran) in 1933, for 16 hours of labor.<sup>136</sup> This kind of labor, in the urban setting, shades over into that of the lowest-paid textile factory workers; indeed, in cotton textiles much of the weaving continued to be done on hand looms.<sup>137</sup> For analytic purposes these carpet-making craftspeople can be considered "day laborers"

<sup>130</sup> Both estimates are in Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 27 table 8, 28 table 9a, citing Z. Z. Abdullaev, *Formirovanie rabocheho klassa Irana* (Baku, 1968), 84.

<sup>131</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 171-74.

<sup>132</sup> "Agricultural and Industrial Activity," 556.

<sup>133</sup> On wages, Floor, *Labour Unions*, 103. On diet, see Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 73.

<sup>134</sup> For estimates, see Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 27 table 8, 28 tables 9 and 9a, 30-32. The discrepancies may be because some of these carpet weavers were urban, some rural, both tribal and peasant.

<sup>135</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 91; see also 92-93.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-4, 117 note 24.

<sup>137</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 180.

directly exploited by merchants.

A third class associated with the petty-commodity mode of production, as in the past, were merchants. As we have already seen a number of the largest merchants left the bazaar to participate in the large trade monopolies and industries, propelling them fully into the capitalist mode of production. The many who were left behind continued to operate on a smaller scale and were undoubtedly harmed by the general trends in the petty-commodity mode during this period. Some merchants were forced out of business. All who travelled from city to city required an official permit, so the state's hand was never far from this sector. The numbers of these small and medium merchants remained great however, and it should be kept in mind that in class terms they continued to exploit the artisans, journeymen and carpet-weavers in descending order below themselves.

On the political plane, guilds were more closely supervised by the state than at any time in the past, having to report their meetings to the local police, who could send someone to observe.<sup>138</sup> Corporate autonomy was thus rather circumscribed. The abolishing of guild taxes paradoxically undermined the social solidarity of the bazaar, as Abrahamian argues, since it lessened the control of masters and elders over apprentices and journeymen.<sup>139</sup> In terms of political culture, the bazaar remained a bastion of support for Islam, and presumably of growing resentment against the state, tempered slightly perhaps by appreciation for the provision of security. Small traders seem to have had little affection for the shah, and collective memories of heroic participation in the Constitutional Revolution lingered as well.<sup>140</sup> Again it is hard to accept Upton's view that "such things as the novelties and superficial improvements around [the artisan] gave him a sense of satisfaction and pride which at least counterbalanced his resentments."<sup>141</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia*, 30 note 1; Bonine, "Shops and Shopkeepers," 235.

<sup>139</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 151-52.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 151; Ashraf, "Iran," 73-74; Nikki R. Keddie, "Religion, Society, and Revolution in Modern Iran," pp. 21-36 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 29; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 43-44 note 104.

<sup>141</sup> Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 77; also 76.

### II.C.3. Classes and Groups Split across Modes of Production

The intelligentsia, ulama and urban marginal classes can be considered urban groups or classes that in the 1930s were no longer strictly speaking *constituent* classes of either urban mode of production but rather had members in both the capitalist and petty-commodity modes. The situations of these three classes did vary a great deal however: the intelligentsia was primarily a capitalist class and the ulama a bazaar-based (petty- commodity) one, and both were intermediate groups or classes in the urban social structure, while the marginal classes were truly split between the two modes of production and were at the bottom of urban society as an underclass. The situations of Iran's religious minorities and urban women generally, other groups that cut across Iran's class structure, will also be discussed here.

The intelligentsia, consisting of teachers, students, doctors, lawyers, artists, writers, publishers and some civil servants, grew along with the state in the 1930s. The secularization and expansion of the educational system provided the main impetus for this, as did to a lesser extent that of the judicial and public health organizations. The censorship of Iran's media worked against this trend, although technological advances probably offset this as new presses were established. The social prestige of intellectuals, particularly those educated abroad, rose greatly. Abrahamian, who must be counting most of the civil service, puts the intelligentsia at a high seven percent of Iran's labor force. Whatever their precise numbers, they were close to the capitalist mode of production, paid salaries by state and private institutions, though not all members were yet within this mode, some doctors, teachers, writers and others remaining close to the bazaar.<sup>142</sup>

Banani feels that Reza Shah was "inspired, encouraged and supported by an articulate majority of the intelligentsia."<sup>143</sup> This is probably true of those who entered the ranks of the civil service and army. Cottam discerns a more basic dilemma facing intellectuals: they felt affinities with Reza's secularism, industrialization program and some type of nationalism, but not his

<sup>142</sup> Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 155; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 29, 102-3, 108; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 145-46; Byron J. Good, "The Transformation of Health Care in Modern Iranian History," pp. 59-92 in Bonine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 74.

<sup>143</sup> Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 47.

authoritarianism and proto-fascist tendencies.<sup>144</sup> This ambivalence was summed up in 1942 by Ahmad Kasravi, whose history of the Constitutional Revolution we drew on in Chapter Five:

[Kasravi] gave the fallen monarch high marks for centralizing the state, pacifying the tribes, disciplining the clergy, unveiling women, eliminating aristocratic titles, introducing mass conscription, undermining "feudal" authorities, trying to unify the population, and establishing modern schools, cities and industries. At the same time, he gave the fallen shah low marks for trampling over the constitution, favoring the military over the civilian administration, accumulating a private fortune, stealing other people's property, murdering progressive intellectuals, and widening the gap between the haves and have-nots.<sup>145</sup>

The intelligentsia then were split in political terms, with minorities supporting the regime (and benefitting from it) and opposing it (and suffering repression), and a middle group which was indeed neutral, noncommittal, or alienated, who benefitted generally from expansion of the bureaucracy, education and industry.

The ulama, technically a part of Iran's intelligentsia but as we know a group with its own (longer) history, institutions and outlook, had a very different experience in the 1930s, at least materially. They lost most of their positions in the judicial and educational systems which now required secular credentials, and thus lost key sources of income and power. Islamic educational institutions in particular were undermined by the state through legislation of their required courses, conscription of young men, imprisonment and harassment of teachers and students. Enrollment at the higher madrasa levels fell severely from 5,984 students in 1925 to 785 in 1941, with only 249 ulama as teachers. Compulsory religious education in the schools was abolished, dervish orders were banned, passion plays and other religious ceremonies were suppressed. Vaqf properties were more tightly administered by the government, further reducing some ulama incomes. The constitutional provision for a supervisory board of mujtahids to rule on the Islamic content of legislation was simply ignored, while ulama representation in the majlis fell to almost nothing by 1940. The ulama retained material and political support in the bazaars, however, continuing to collect religious taxes

<sup>144</sup> Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 41-42.

<sup>145</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 153-54, citing Kasravi's articles in *Parcham* (Banner). For other evidence of the intelligentsia's views and outlook, see *ibid.*, 152-55; Keddie, "Religion, Society and Revolution," 29; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 254-55; and Ashraf, "Iran," 81.

there and perform some notarizing and other services. This bound them more closely to the petty-commodity mode of production, and the decline of this mode vis-a-vis the capitalist corresponds to the rise of the secular intelligentsia at the expense of the ulama. Some leading clerics did retain considerable amounts of wealth of course, others diligently tried to preserve their educational traditions, and many were undoubtedly impoverished in this period. As we shall see in section IV, some opposition to the state was expressed, but it was generally ruthlessly repressed in what was a dark period for the ulama as a whole.<sup>146</sup>

The most destitute class in the urban sector was the marginal population living as servants, watchmen, part-time manual labor, beggars, prostitutes and thieves. Already the poorest people in the cities, their income declined further or at best did not increase in the 1930s, as casual labor made very low wages and inflation and unemployment grew. It is difficult to gauge the size of this class. Already a portion of Qajar society, their numbers swelled as the first migrants came to the cities in search of work. Estimates of unemployment vary widely from 50 percent among unskilled labor in the 1920s to 2-4 percent of the urban population in the 1930s; the figure of 30,000 has been suggested for 1940. Reverend R. J. Thompson noted in the 1940s that "a great proportion are poor, ill-fed and in rags."<sup>147</sup> A campaign to remove beggars from the streets did nothing to improve their lot. Reza Shah is said to have broken the hold of the *lutis* (popular armed toughs involved in "protection" and prostitution rackets, along with more legal activities) in the various neighborhoods of Tehran in the 1920s, but undoubtedly this element continued to exist. They and the other urban marginal groups mentioned here lived precariously in the interstices of the capitalist and petty-commodity modes of production.

<sup>146</sup> For this overview I have drawn on Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth-century Iran," 203-4; Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 54-59; Algar, 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Keddie, "Iran, 1797-1941," 52; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 18 note, 71-81, 172 note 120; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 263; Behnam, *Cultural Foundations of Iranian Politics*, 29; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 145; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 87.

<sup>147</sup> Reverend R. J. Thompson, "Conditions of Daily Life in Iran, 1947," pp. 199-208 in *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, volume XXXV, parts III-IV (July-October 1948), 205. For this paragraph generally I have drawn on Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 238-39; Willem M. Floor, "The Political Role of the *Lutis* in Iran," pp. 83-95 in Bonine and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 102; Floor, *Labour Unions*, 79 note 223, 103; Ashraf, "Iran," 81-81; Elwell-Sutton, "Reza Shah the Great," 43; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 28 table 9; and Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 35.

The role of women in urban society is a large topic about which a few points may be suggested here. Women began to get educations and entered the labor force in increased numbers in this period. About 450 graduated from high school in 1940 (compared with 645 boys) and the first women university graduates went on to distinguished professional careers. At the working-class end of the social structure, as many as 80,000 women worked in industry, and unknown numbers of others in shops and offices. They were paid extremely poorly, worse than male labor, and worked long hours in bad conditions especially in carpets and textiles. Despite the shah's general image as the emancipator of women, the civil code restated most of the Islamic shari'a's discriminations against women in family law, and even the celebrated "unveiling" of women in 1936 has found its critics on the grounds that it confined traditional, particularly older, women to their houses, while the younger generation had independently made considerable progress toward taking part in public life without the legislation. Women did not get the vote. So overall much progress was made in terms of participation but within a limited set of opportunities and life chances, both compared to men and in class terms.<sup>148</sup>

Evidence on the religious minorities suggests that the 1930s were a better time than the Qajar reign in that they afforded a modicum of security and opportunity, again within real limits. The state tried to minimize the distinctiveness of all sub-groups, closing down the religious schools and printing presses of the minorities. Jewish families benefitted from lessened restrictions on their dress, residence and economic activities to obtain education in greater numbers, and some bought urban and rural property for the first time. Jewish textile factory owners emerged at Isfahan. But their majlis deputy was executed with no explanation in 1931, and as Iran tilted toward Germany later in the decade official and public persecution found new expression.<sup>149</sup> The Armenians too suffered cultural

<sup>148</sup> On women see Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 108; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 173-74, 262; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 97-98, 101, 108-9; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 126-27; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 144; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 26, and *Labour Unions*, 104; and Elwell-Sutton, "Reza Shah the Great," 34, citing Badr al-muluk Bamdad, *Zan-i Irani az Inqilab-i Mashrutiyyat ta Inqilab-i Safid* [The Iranian Woman from the Constitutional Revolution to the White Revolution] (Tehran: Ibn Sina, n.d.), volume 1, 99.

<sup>149</sup> Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 84; Laurence D. Loeb, "The Religious Dimension of Modernization Among the Jews of Shiraz," pp. 301-322 in Bunine and Keddie, editors, *Modern Iran*, 308; Floor, *Labour Unions*, 80 note 237; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 163.

assimilation, but a few (perhaps from the long-standing trading families) became successful capitalists, and some peasant proprietors are noted by Lambton.<sup>150</sup> The Zoroastrian community rose somewhat in status as the state sought to glorify Iran's pre-Islamic heritage. In 1940 however their delegate to the majlis died under suspicious circumstances.<sup>151</sup>

#### II.D. Conclusions: Modes of Production and the Limits to Development

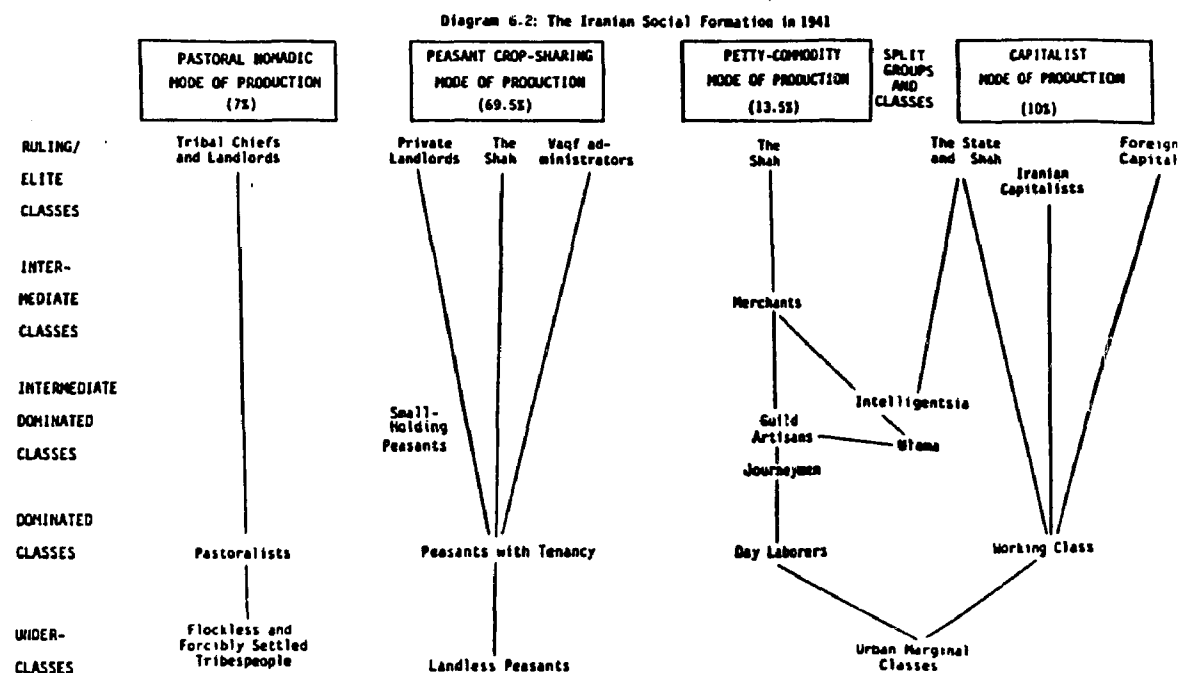
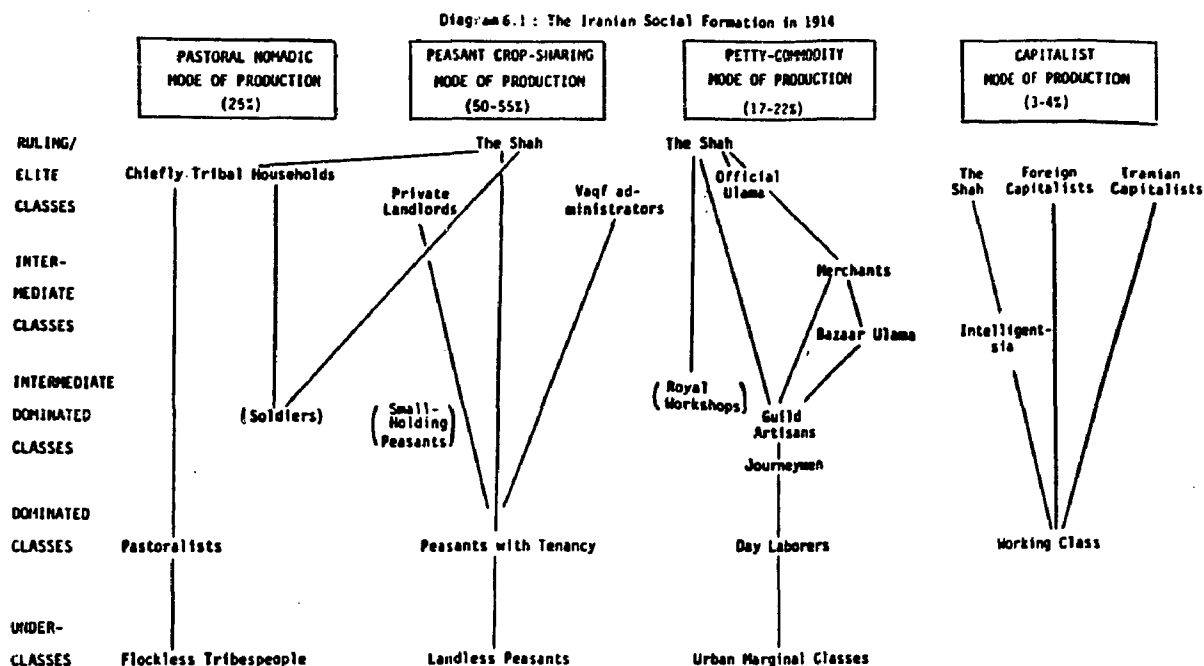
To return to the debate with which this section opened, we can now conclude that neither was Iran's class structure static and unchanged, nor was economic development a thorough-going "break-through." Diagrams 6.1 and 6.2 make the first of these points by providing a basis for comparison of the constituent modes of production and their relative proportions of the population in 1914 and 1941.<sup>152</sup> Thus internal shifts in the relative strength of each mode of production are quite significant. As tribal nomads declined from 25 to 7 percent of the population, peasants rose as a result from 50-55 percent to almost 70 percent; and the working class rose from 3-4 to 10 percent of the population at the expense of artisans who declined from 17-22 to 13.5 percent of the work force (recall that in absolute terms all but the tribes increased in numbers as population grew by 50 percent from 10 to 14.55 million). Measuring the contribution of each sector to Iran's gross national product, a very rough estimate would be that the crop-sharing mode contributed 50 percent, pastoralism 10 percent, capitalism 20 percent and the petty-commodity mode 20 percent.<sup>153</sup> Thus the capitalist, and to a lesser degree the petty-commodity and pastoral sectors contributed more than their share of the

<sup>150</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 142; Floor, *Labour Unions*, 80 note 237; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 275.

<sup>151</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 198; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 86-87.

<sup>152</sup> The calculation of the population involved in each mode of production in 1941 is a complicated one and only a very rough estimate is possible. Starting with Floor's figures of 3.75 million workers in agriculture and 1.2 million in urban areas, we can give the two agrarian modes of production 76.5 percent and the two urban modes 23.5 percent of the total. For the crop-sharing and nomadic modes, I have then worked from Bharier's figures of 10.35 million peasants and 1 million nomads out of a 14.55 million total population, giving the pastoralists then 7 percent of the population, and the peasantry 69.5 percent to make the total rural sector correspond to 76.5 percent. To divide the urban share between capitalist and petty-commodity modes I took Floor's highest estimate of the working class—525,000 people—giving the capitalist mode 43 percent of the urban sector's 1.2 million workers: 43 percent of 23.5 percent gives us 10 percent. By default the petty-commodity mode is left with 13.5 percent. See Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 26, 28 tables 9 and 9a; and Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 27 table 2, 31.

<sup>153</sup> This is based on crude calculations from scattered data in Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 3 diagram; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 1; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 76; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 131; and Tabari, *Jam'eh-i Iran dar Dauran-i Riza Shah*, 78.



population, the peasantry much less.

In terms of the class structure itself, further changes occurred within and between each mode of production. In the tribal sector khans became landlords to a greater extent than formerly, while some tribespeople, forced to settle, became peasants in such desperate circumstances as to constitute an underclass. Soldiers were no longer provided to the state by the tribal levy system and have dropped

out of the picture, even though tribespeople, like all others, were now conscripted. The crop-sharing mode of production remained virtually intact: private landlords consolidated and perhaps raised their position and the shah no longer controlled as many state lands (though he became a large private landlord). More changes occurred in the urban sectors. In the petty-commodity mode there were no longer the royal workshops of Safavid and Qajar times, and the category of state-appointed "official ulama" no longer makes much sense given the reduced role played by the ulama. Instead, the ulama, along with the intelligentsia and especially the urban marginal classes, have been conceptualized as split between the petty-commodity and capitalist modes of production, and to signify the rise of the intelligentsia at the ulama's expense they have been placed in different intermediate levels in the class structure. The ulama retained their links with artisans and bazaar merchants, and the intelligentsia was tied to the state to some degree. In the capitalist mode the state has emerged as a dominant actor, and Iranian capitalists have been joined by the large merchants of the import-export trade. There is perhaps the embryo of a "triple alliance" forming in the capitalist mode, but foreign capital was really quite distinct from state and private, and state capital predominated qualitatively if not quantitatively over private. As before, Iran's class structure remained extremely complex, with multiple elites, intermediate, dominated and underclass groups, and these divisions and their potential alliances will come into play in analyzing social movements in section IV of this chapter and in Chapter Seven generally.

In terms of economic development a considerable amount of industrialization did occur, and while this was on a scale unprecedented in Iranian perspective, severe limits on this process have been exposed as well. In agriculture there was no land reform, increase in productivity or change in techniques. Production kept up with population but the peasantry remained at a very low standard of living. The tribal sector was severely dislocated by state efforts to sedentarize nomads, with great loss of life and a decrease in pastoral production. Nor in the urban sector where the state concentrated its developmentalist efforts did daily life improve for the majority of the population. The standard of living, as measured by income and diet, housing, health and education, did not rise significantly. Industrialization, along with state interference in foreign trade to build the railroad,

contributed to a long bout of inflation after 1933 that caused prices to double or more by 1941.<sup>154</sup> Wages could not keep pace. While gross national product doubled between 1925 and 1940, income inequality worsened. The rural sector paid for the cities' cheap food, and the urban masses paid through heavy taxes for capitalists' and merchants' profits.<sup>155</sup> The benefits of industrialization were spread unevenly, touching only a few cities and making Tehran far too central relative to the provinces. And as we have seen, Iran continued to lag behind such other Middle Eastern industrializers as Egypt and Turkey.

This picture of growth with uneven benefits across classes, sectors and regions is the pattern we have conceptualized as a *dependent development*. To understand the world-systemic parameters of this process, Iran's relations with other countries, particularly in the West, should be taken into account.

### III. Iran in the World-System of the 1930s

Reza Shah and his government made various attempts to establish Iran's independence in the world-system of the 1930s. The system of "capitulations" was unilaterally cancelled in 1928, thus rescinding the extraterritorial privileges granted to a series of countries by the Qajars. A number of other rights were subsequently denied foreigners—to own land in Iran, to operate schools, to marry Iranians, to take administrative positions in the state, and even to travel freely. As we have seen the state took control of Iran's foreign trade, directly participating in part of it and regulating the rest. The state also took over the customs and telegraph network from foreign administrators. Though loans and capital were sought abroad until the early 1930s, when these were not forthcoming, Iran raised its own capital for investments such as the railroad, thereby turning a necessity into a virtue.<sup>156</sup> The national debt was similarly reduced. Reza Shah was in general deeply suspicious of

<sup>154</sup> On inflation see Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 46-47 table 3, 48-49 table 4; Kamran M. Dadgah, "The Inflationary Process of the Iranian Economy: A Rejoinder," pp. 388-391 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 19, number 3 (August 1987), 389 table 1; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 148.

<sup>155</sup> On GNP and income inequality, see Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 3 diagram; Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 2; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 59; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 102; Katouzi-an, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 132; and Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 175-76.

<sup>156</sup> A 1931 speech of Reza's announced the need to "invite and encourage foreign capital to come to our coun-

foreign influences (though he sought to remake his country in the image of the West), and did little to cultivate friendships abroad.<sup>157</sup>

Despite these attitudes and measures, the realities were ones of continued dependence. The loss of capitulations, for example, had a limited effect, as the new legal codes gave foreigners the security to operate in Iran, while tariff rates were guaranteed through 1936. More seriously, the depression caused prices for Iran's export commodities to fall on the world market, a trend exacerbated by the depreciation of the rial. Foreign investment was limited mainly to two areas—the British-operated oil fields and Soviet-operated Caspian fisheries—but it continued to grow, and British control of Iran's most valuable resource was consolidated by renegotiation of the oil concession in 1933. Other areas of foreign control were in the insurance and shipping sectors. Finally, the geopolitical balance of power also seriously circumscribed Iran's freedom to maneuver after world war broke out in 1939. This story will be told at the conclusion of this chapter; now we will look more closely at Iran's relations with the West and its Asian neighbors.

### III.A. Relations with the West

The West continued to impinge fairly heavily in Iran in the 1930s. This time, instead of the Anglo-Russian rivalry of the pre-1917 period or sole British hegemony as from 1918 till the 1921 coup, there was a shifting, three-way struggle for influence in Iran among imperial England, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

Great Britain remained on the whole the most powerful Western country in Iran. The intense political pressure which had been exerted throughout the Qajar period and had almost culminated in the 1919 Agreement subsided to a great degree, and outright interference in domestic politics and national sovereignty virtually ceased. Politically, Banani refers to this as a period of "benevolent inaction," although Britain retained influence among certain bureaucrats, landowners, merchants and

try," while in 1940 he told a cabinet minister "there are strings attached to all foreign loans and we would be bound to come under the influence of those countries." He preferred to extract the needed capital from his own population. See Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 141, 199.

<sup>157</sup> This paragraph draws on *ibid.*, 142, 243, 257.

tribal khans, particularly in the area of the southern oil fields. Reza Shah, for his part, as had the Qajar shahs before him, looked to Great Britain as a possible friend and ally against the more tangible possibility of a threat from his north (the Soviet Union). Nevertheless he sent no students to Britain nor did he contract British administrators or companies for the state, reflecting his unease at the power of the country which had been present at his coup. British policy too remained one of grudging acceptance of Reza as the strong ruler needed to vouchsafe stability in Iran, both against domestic opposition and the spread of Soviet influence.<sup>158</sup>

Economic relations were the most prominent aspect of British influence in Iran. In the 1920s Britain became Iran's leading trading partner, providing (with British India) 67 percent of Iran's imports from 1920 to 1924, a figure which fell however to 46 percent for 1925-29 and 29 percent for 1930-34. Iran's exports to England and India declined from a lower plateau: 37 percent in 1920-24, 20 percent in 1925-29, 23 percent in 1930-34. By the late 1930s Britain ranked a distant third in Iran's trade after Germany and the Soviet Union, at about 17 percent. The balance of this trade was in England's favor throughout the decade although Iran's deficit diminished somewhat. The British-owned Imperial Bank lost the right to print Iran's money to the Bank Melli, but received 200,000 pounds sterling in compensation and the right to buy, sell and mortgage property; it held 7-8 million pounds in assets. In July 1941, on the eve of Reza's fall, a commercial agreement was signed between the two countries "that could so operate as to give the British a virtual monopoly over Iran's trade."<sup>159</sup> The war prevented this from coming to pass.

The key to the British position in Iran was neither politics nor trade. The simple possession of the D'Arcy oil concession guaranteed the British the lion's share of the profits on Iran's most valuable resource and made the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC, formerly APOC) the largest capitalist employer in the country. After Iran's royalties proved very erratic from 1924 to 1931 (during which period Iran received 7,348,000 pounds sterling to the company's 31,501,000), Reza Shah tried

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 256; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 13; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 111.

<sup>159</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 202. Data on trade and banking may be found in Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 111-12 table 4, 238; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 46 table 5, 67, 68 table 15, 69 table 16, 70; and "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 406.

to unilaterally cancel the concession. Britain appealed to the League of Nations and in 1933 a new contract was negotiated which changed the basis of the royalty from 16 percent of net profits to four shillings (about \$1) a ton, with a minimum annual payment of about one million pounds sterling. The company also agreed to pay an extra one million pounds for 1931 and another million for signing the concession. The area covered was reduced by four-fifths but included all the known oil fields, and a key clause extended the duration of the concession by 28 years till 1993. Thus did Reza Shah act hastily to abolish the concession and irrationally end up by extending it. In the 1930s Iran averaged about 2.5 million pounds sterling a year in royalties and taxes, up from less than one million pounds annually in the 1920s. Royalties rose nine times between 1919 and 1939 but production rose about the same amount. The company continued to make five times what Iran received, and by 1932 was worth 50 million pounds. In 1938/39 the AIOC imported more capital goods into Iran than the entire imports of the country's non-oil sector. Bharier calls this situation

... a classic example of an enclave organization—a foreign-oriented industry superimposed on an entirely different kind of economy, without any real linkages between it and the rest of the economy. A.I.O.C. built up its own well-equipped houses, schools, and hospitals, used its own imported food and equipment supplies, established its own air services, postal and communication facilities, roads, and even sea ports. Parts of Abadan and Fields became European oases...<sup>160</sup>

Production levels were geared to meet the needs of the industrialized European economies. Through the institution of the AIOC the English retained a preeminent position in the Iranian economy.<sup>161</sup>

The Soviet Union, too, exercised less political pressure than the Tsarist government had in the past but exerted vigorous commercial pressure on Iran in the 1930s. Politically, on balance the Soviets accepted the Reza Shah regime as a factor working for stability in the region, one which would at least prevent encroachment on the U.S.S.R. by hostile forces and at best might actually oppose British imperialism. The Soviets found some political supporters among Iranian intellectuals and working class groups, to replace the Qajar court and merchants who had supported the Tsar.

<sup>160</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 160.

<sup>161</sup> The data in this paragraph are drawn from *ibid.*, 157-58 table 3; Robert B. Stobaugh, "The Evolution of Iranian Oil Policy, 1925-1975," pp. 201-252 in Lenczowski, editor, *Iran Under the Pahlavis*, 203-5; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 56, 58, 74-82; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 142; Ferrier, *The History of the British Petroleum Company*, 1, 10-11; and "Revised Agreement: Persia and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company," pp. 188-196 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II.

Iran for its part accepted the commercial importance of its northern neighbor but remained suspicious of Soviet geo-political intentions, arresting several hundred minor government officials as Soviet agents in 1931.<sup>162</sup> A 1927 treaty guaranteed neutrality and non-intervention between the two countries.<sup>163</sup>

Trade was initially interrupted after 1917 but by 1927 the Soviet Union was again Iran's principal market for the rice, tobacco, dried fruit, cotton and wool of the northern provinces and trade had regained its high pre-1914 levels. Between 1928 and 1930 however the Soviets applied their state monopoly of foreign trade to Iran, again causing dislocations (a cut in imports of Iranian goods) that prompted Iran's own trade monopoly of 1931. These steps drove trade increasingly into a bilateral, barter-type pattern. A 1931 commercial treaty gave the U.S.S.R. a three-year trade monopoly for the sale of sugar, matches and petroleum in northern Iran, displeasing local merchants. The Soviets were sometimes accused of dumping these products, especially matches, on Iran's markets to drive local factories out of business. Imports from Iran were curtailed when the Soviets undertook heavy industrialization in the 1930s. The new Soviet trade surplus was another factor which depressed the economy of northern Iran. Trade fluctuated in the 1930s: about 28 percent of Iran's imports and 24 percent of exports were with the Soviet Union, reaching as high as 38 percent of Iran's foreign trade in 1938. This placed the U.S.S.R. ahead of Britain. Trade dropped abruptly however due to a dispute in 1938/39 and virtually ceased in the next year. In 1940 a new commercial treaty was signed which Iran hoped would facilitate transit of German goods through the U.S.S.R. Again the war intervened to dash this plan. The main Soviet investment in Iran was the concession to operate the Caspian fisheries, renewed in 1927/28 for 25 years as a Soviet monopoly with most of the profits accruing to Moscow. The Soviets also operated an insurance company in Iran, helped build a variety of agricultural-processing establishments, and opposed foreign oil

<sup>162</sup> Iranian suspicions were well-founded as a secret note between Germany and the Soviet Union in late 1940—admittedly a time of great international turmoil—was corrected by Molotov, the Soviet commissar for foreign affairs, to state: "... the focal point of the aspirations of the Soviet Union [lies, or is centered] south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf": see "Russo-German Negotiations for a Projected Soviet Sphere of Influence in the Near and Middle East," pp. 228-230 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 230.

<sup>163</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 136-37, 256; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 317; Ashraf, "Iran," 55-56, 59.

concessions in the north, but in any case no new fields were found. The overall economic relationship continued to be one between vastly unequal partners, with the requirements and rhythms of the Soviet economy setting the tone for commerce and investment.<sup>164</sup>

The main beneficiary of the relaxation of British and Soviet pressure on Iran was Nazi Germany. Even before 1933 ties had grown with the appointment of German administrators in the Bank Melli, the award of a contract to the Junkers Company for exclusive air service in Iran and a 1928 treaty making Germany a most-favored nation for trade. Reza Shah sought a counterbalance to British and Soviet strength; his relationship with Hitlerian Germany was also one of a more general affinity. Iran was accorded "the honor of Aryan status." Katouzian considers Reza "both pro-German and pro-Nazi. For he was an *étatiste*, a militarist, a despot, a racist and pan-Iranist."<sup>165</sup> The German ministry of propaganda issued a journal called *Iran-i Bastan* (Ancient Iran) to glorify the Iranian past and foster nationalism. In more sinister fashion a 1934 report to Hitler recommended:

When in the future we shall be staking out an adequate living space [*Lebensraum*] for our nation, among the lands between Asia and Africa, it will be imperative that we work towards the creation of a block of nations in which the predomination of the strongest Teutonic races would be ensured. It would be necessary first of all to incorporate into this sphere the states of the Danube basin, Turkey and Persia.<sup>166</sup>

Even more ominously, a 1937 agreement between Italy and Germany accorded Iran and Iraq to a German sphere of influence, Egypt and Syria to an Italian sphere. By the late 1930s there were as many as 700 German advisors, technicians and experts in Iran working in education, industry and administration. Support for Germany came from students educated there, various politicians, journalists, merchants, industrialists and army officers, some of whom received widely spread bribes. There was much diffuse Iranian support for Germany, motivated above all by anti-British and anti-

<sup>164</sup> Data in this paragraph are drawn from Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 130, 132; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 121, 145, 194-95, 199; "A Letter from Teheran," 91; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 105-6; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 113 table 5, 148, 253; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 150-54; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 90; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 66, 89, 99, 135-36, 191-202; and "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 407, 410.

<sup>165</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 134.

<sup>166</sup> Report of Alfred Rosenberg, chief of the Nazi Foreign Policy Office, quoted in Miron Rezun, *The Iranian Crisis of 1941. The Actors: Britain, Germany and The Soviet Union* (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1982), 90 note 72.

"Russian" sentiment.<sup>167</sup>

These relations spilled over into the trade domain, where by the late 1930s Germany was Iran's largest partner, surpassing first Britain and then the Soviet Union. Imports from Germany rose from 2 percent (1920-24) to 5 percent (1925-29) to 8 percent (1930-34) and then leaped to 25 percent from 1935 to 1939. Exports in the same periods climbed from nothing to 32 percent. In 1940-41 Germany accounted for 42.6 percent of Iran's imports and 47.9 percent of exports. As German industrialization quickened in the 1930s demand for food and raw materials grew, while as Iran industrialized it required machinery and spare parts. A 1939 agreement promised that Iran would export cotton, wool, wheat, rice, barley and other agricultural products in sizable quantities. Bilateral barter-type trade expanded. This was primarily to Germany's advantage since Iran required German products more than the reverse and terms of trade and exchange rates favored Germany's finished and capital goods. The trade became imbalanced in 1939 with Iran's exports exceeding imports by 40 million marks (about \$15 million), a form of "involuntary lending" to Germany. Iran's 1938 trade dispute with the Soviets further strengthened Germany's hand. In addition to the commerce, German firms played large roles in the building of the railroad and other industrial projects. A \$40 million order was placed for the import of blast furnaces and a rolling mill for iron and steel. Work was started but not completed by 1941. At this point, the eve of the Allied invasion of Iran, the Germans had fashioned a very strong relationship with Reza Shah's state and the Iranian economy. Only the invasion would bring this to a halt.<sup>168</sup>

Compared with Britain, Germany and the Soviet Union, the United States in the 1930s was a distant power as far as Iran was concerned. The Millspaugh financial mission left Iran in 1927 with Reza Shah disappointed at its failure to generate foreign loans, coupled with mistrust of the

<sup>167</sup> On Germany and Iran in the 1930s, see *ibid.*, 7-30, 33; Elwell-Sutton, "Reza Shah the Great," 44; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 177, 201; Barry Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions. The American Experience and Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 18; Ashraf, "Iran," 59; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 93. For a telling statement on these reasons for Iranian sympathies for Germany in the context of attitudes towards Britain and the Soviet Union, see the conversation recorded in Rezun, *The Iranian Crisis of 1941*, 95-96 note 150.

<sup>168</sup> For these economic ties see Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 113 table 5; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 203-212; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 162-64, 199; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 90-91.

American advisor's authority. The American mission schools were closed down in the 1928 educational reforms. A diplomatic flap occurred in 1936 when Iran withdrew its personnel from Washington to protest the 1935 arrest of its ambassador for speeding and subsequent negative newspaper articles on the shah. Ties improved in 1938 when Reza wrote to Roosevelt: "We personally, as well as the Iranian people, value ... the maintenance and strengthening of the friendship which for long years has existed between the two countries."<sup>169</sup> When world war broke out Reza made requests for loans and military equipment but little came of them. On the economic front, most-favored nation commercial rights were reciprocally extended in 1928. The United States ranked fourth in Iran's trade in the 1930s providing 7-8 percent of imports, mainly motor vehicles and agricultural machinery, and taking 12-13 percent of exports, mainly carpets from Kirman, which were badly hit by the depression. American oil companies tried unsuccessfully to secure and exploit concessions in Iran from 1923 to 1941. These fairly modest measures did give the United States a solid foothold in Iran, but this would grow into a dominant presence only with World War 2 and its aftermath.<sup>170</sup>

Other Western countries had some dealings with Iran but not nearly of the scope or intensity to establish any relationship of dependence. France continued to hold its privileged place as a cultural influence, and many of Iran's students abroad went there. Negative press reports in the French papers also led to a break in diplomatic contact in 1937 but relations were restored just prior to World War 2. The French also had a small share in the fruitless search for northern oil.<sup>171</sup> Denmark installed a fish-canning plant at Bandar 'Abbas and a large cement factory, while the Dutch participated in the northern oil explorations after 1939. Engineers for the railway construction project came from Scandinavia, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Greece and Czechoslovakia, in addition to Britain, the United States and Germany. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain, along with Brazil and Uruguay, were formally affected by the abolition of

<sup>169</sup> Quoted by Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 187-88 note 5.

<sup>170</sup> On the United States and Iran see *ibid*, 123, 175, 192, 194; Banani, *The Modernization of Iran*, 96; Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions*, 16-17; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 160-61; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 113 table 5, 156; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 47; and Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 294.

<sup>171</sup> On France, see Elwell-Sutton, "Reza Shah the Great," 43-44; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 122, 126; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 146.

capitulations in 1928. None of them had extensive contact or commerce with Iran.<sup>172</sup>

### III.B. Iran's Relations with Asia

Iran's relations with its neighbors in Asia and the Middle East were certainly important in some cases but were not factors in establishing the shape of Iranian social structure through any mechanism approaching dependence. The most significant regional undertaking in which Iran played a part was the 1937 Sa'adabad Pact with Afghanistan, Iraq and Turkey. Formally called a "Treaty of Nonaggression," a careful reading of its contents suggests that it was aimed less at meeting any external threats posed by each to the others, or by third parties to any of them, but rather at internal threats from revolutionary movements within each country, as article 7 makes clear:

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes to prevent, within his respective frontiers, the formation or activities of armed bands, associations or organisations to subvert the established institutions, or disturb the order or security of any part, whether situated on the frontier or elsewhere, of the territory of another Party, or to change the constitutional system of such other Party.<sup>173</sup>

This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that the treaty did not prevent the British from intervening in Iraq in 1940 or the British and Soviets from invading Iran in 1941.<sup>174</sup> For that matter it was not invoked on the security dimension either, but it did constitute an effort to conduct regional diplomacy by a group of non-Western nations without resorting to dealings with core world powers.

Individually, there were strained relations with Iraq and warm ones with Turkey. Iraq was recognized as a country by Iran in 1929, resolving a conflict over the treatment of Iranian pilgrims to the Shi'i holy cities from two years before. In 1935 a border dispute broke out over rights to the Shatt al-'Arab waterway dividing the two countries at the head of the Persian Gulf. Iraq referred its claim to the League of Nations and the border was settled before the Sa'adabad Pact was signed in 1937.<sup>175</sup> Reza Shah travelled to Turkey in 1934 (his only trip abroad), where he got along well with

<sup>172</sup> On these countries and Iran see Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 147, 156, 178; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 122, 126; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 146.

<sup>173</sup> "Treaty of Nonaggression (Sa'adabad Pact)," pp. 214-216 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 215.

<sup>174</sup> Sepehr Zabih, *The Left in Contemporary Iran. Ideology, Organisation and the Soviet Connection* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, and Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 3.

<sup>175</sup> On Iran and Iraq in this period, see "Affairs in Persia," 85, and Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 126, 163, 200.

Kemal Atatürk and had an opportunity to observe the latter's industrialization and secularization attempts. The Ottoman Bank operated four branches in Iran in the 1930s, and Turkey probably had the most extensive trade of any Asian nation with Iran.<sup>176</sup>

The political climate of the 1930s was conducive to contact with one Asian power—Japan. Large orders were placed for Iranian cotton in 1933, so that Japan could export goods of its own to Iran (this was necessary due to the trade monopoly). This worked to the point where Japan supplied 9 percent of Iran's imports from 1930-34 and 7 percent from 1935-39, though it accounted for only 2-3 percent of Iranian exports. In 1939 a treaty of friendship was concluded between the two countries.<sup>177</sup> Japan, the one great Asian power of this period, ultimately was too far from Iran and too little concerned to play a larger role within the country. The Asian and Middle Eastern world thus did not approach the capacity of the European core in influencing the Iranian economy and polity between the world wars.

### III.C. Conclusions: Iran as Dependent Periphery in an Unstable World-System

The 1930s can be seen as a transitional period in Iran's place within the world-economy. For Ashraf, the Reza Shah era represents a transition from "the semi-colonialism of the 19th century and early 20th century to the neo-colonialism of the cold war era."<sup>178</sup> Analogously, in terms of the perspectives adopted in this study, we can see a transition from the dependence on rival imperialisms—Great Britain and Russia—of the Qajar period to the new dependence on America that would emerge after World War 2. Iran remained dependent despite Reza Shah's avowed nationalism, self-reliance and strong state, due chiefly to three inter-related mechanisms: control of oil by the British, unequal trade with the Soviet Union and Germany, and the patterns of trade of a peripheral supplier of raw materials.

<sup>176</sup> On Iran and Turkey, see Wilber, *Reza Shah Pahlavi*, 160, and Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 239. I have seen no data on Iran's trade with its Asian neighbors (except British India). The amounts were not large it seems.

<sup>177</sup> On Iran's relations with Japan, see "A Letter from Teheran," 91-91; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 113 table 5; and Upton, *The History of Modern Iran*, 62.

<sup>178</sup> Ashraf, "Iran," 60-61.

The emergence of oil as a key commodity in the world-economy and of Iran as the fifth-largest producer in the 1920s and 1930s confirmed Iran's place in the world-system as a peripheral supplier of raw materials. Iran's exports consisted almost entirely of oil, agricultural produce and carpets. Iran's major trading partners—Germany, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States—supplied finished manufactures and capital goods. During the world depression this pattern of trade worked against Iran as the value in rials of its raw materials exports fell by two or three times while the cost of its imports rose in the stronger currencies of the core. When Iran introduced its trade monopoly, this shifted its trade to Germany and the Soviet Union who benefitted from bilateral arrangements which naturally favored the larger, more industrialized (read "core") economy. Thus Iran was exploited by the terms of trade for the products it bought and sold, the strength of the various core economies with which it traded, and the debilitating consequences of being a peripheral economy during a world-wide depression.

Finally, the 1930s were transitional in the sense that Iran's economy moved closer to dependence on a single commodity to finance state projects and balance trade. Without oil royalties the trade balance would have continued to be negative as it had been since before the turn of the twentieth century. With oil, Iran began to run positive overall trade balances after 1931, obviating the need for foreign loans. Nevertheless, the bulk of the profits from possession of this valuable resource accrued to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company owned by the British government, which took about an 80 percent share to Iran's 20 percent. And the oil sector became an isolated enclave with minimal industrial, technological or employment links to the domestic economy, geared instead to the demands and cycles of the advanced industrial nations of the core.

Thus the 1930s confirmed Iran's place as a periphery of the world-economy. Economic dependence vis-a-vis Germany, Great Britain and the Soviet Union remained as great as it had been on Tsarist Russia and Great Britain in Qajar times. Instabilities in the world geo-political situation would show the extent of this dependence on external powers in 1941, a topic with which this chapter will conclude.

#### IV. Social Movements and External Intervention in the Reza Shah Period

##### IV.A. The Compression of Social Forces: A Thesis

The period from 1925 to 1941 can be seen as one of a *compression of social forces*, by which I mean a period in which social forces were fettered from expressing themselves by a strong state. In a sense this evokes the classic Marxist tension between forces and relations of production, the idea being that over a period of time classes develop to the maximum point permitted by the technological level of production and the balance of power between exploiters and exploited. When that point is reached, pressures build up which can only be resolved through class conflict. In Iran during the 1930s Reza Shah clamped down on all forms of dissent in society through legislative, institutional and military measures. This was made possible by a certain division of labor in dependency and exploitation effected during his reign: foreign domination became more solely economic rather than political and economic as in the past, while internal domination shifted to the state as sole political power and a growing economic actor. When Reza was removed by external forces in 1941 this led to an explosion of social movements in the period from 1941 to 1953, and then, interestingly, another period of compression from 1953 to 1977, followed by a second explosion in 1978-79. In both periods of compression we find a combination of economic expansion and political repression.

A brief consideration of the balance of social forces in the 1930s substantiates this thesis. Reza Shah's main sources of support came from the incumbents of the institutions he created—army officers, bureaucrats, monopoly traders, industrialists and a segment of the intelligentsia. Groups and classes which opposed him—the ulama, tribes, progressive intellectuals and working class—were ruthlessly repressed. Others were either closely watched (the guilds), coopted or indifferent (landlords), or struggling too hard for daily survival to resist the state (peasants, urban marginals, day laborers, and, to an extent, the working class). Though Reza's state lacked deep legitimation in civil society it was able to rule by this combination of extending material advantages to new groups, repressing long-standing opponents and the losers in the developmental process, and keeping much of the population either apathetic, apolitical or frightened. Reliance on the army successfully underpinned this

approach to power for most of his reign, and, as we shall see, though social movements did occur they were defeated. Eventually Reza was forced to abdicate by the application of irresistible force from outside the country, which in turn allowed expression to pent-up internal forces once again.

#### **IV.B. Social Movements in the Reza Shah Period: Pressure Applied**

**Early revolts.** The typical pattern followed by a few revolts early in Reza's reign was a spontaneous uprising over local grievances by tribespeople, peasants, army garrisons or urban lower classes, followed by swift military reprisal. In Salmas and Dilman in June 1926 eight hundred soldiers, most of whom came from peasant families, revolted. Their grievance was pay arrears of several months and hardship for their families. They attacked and seized Khui, where units of the garrison, a large number of pishivaran (craftspeople and small traders) and workers, the urban poor and neighboring peasants joined them. They then attacked Maku but government troops dispatched from Tabriz and loyal tribal khans defeated them. The rebels were arrested, tried in military courts and dozens were executed. In Fuman (Gilan province) soldiers who had deserted formed "partisan groups" supported by pishivaran and peasants, and fought local landlords and government officials. The outcome of this action is not recorded and it may be presumed to have been defeated or dissipated on its own. A third soldier-people revolt occurred in Turkoman Sahra from June 24 to July 18, 1926. Soldiers mutinied, demanding the removal of Reza Shah and establishment of a democratic republic. They received the support of peasants and tribespeople and occupied Quchan, Shirvan and Bujnurd. They distributed the grain of the wealthy to the poor and carried out reforms in agricultural taxes before meeting final defeat at the hands of government and local troops.<sup>179</sup>

From 1927 to 1932 there occurred the rebellions of Arab, Qashqa'i, Bakhtiari, Kurdish, Baluchi and other tribes already noted. These ended in military defeat, cooptation or execution of khans and settlement or strict military rule over tribespeople. One further intriguing episode was recorded by the British consul in Isfahan in 1928:

<sup>179</sup> Ivanov gives the fullest description of these revolts in *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 82-83. Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 117-18, mentions the first and last.

A few of the landowning khans have had difficulties with their peasant tribesmen who have rebelled and claimed that the land and water belong to God and those working on the land, namely themselves. In one village, a committee composed of ex-servants, who had been dismissed by the khans and had visited Tehran and Isfahan, adopted a program of an unmistakably Bolshevik complexion. They propagated among the villagers new ideas of freedom and equality. The government, therefore, has authorized the military to use force if necessary to get the peasants to pay the local khans.<sup>180</sup>

The complexity of Iranian social structure is well illustrated by this image of peasant tribespeople being instigated to rebel by urbanized tribal servants against tribal landlords. The severity of government reprisals is also suggested by the estimate that in the period from July to December 1932 more than 150 peasants were shot by the army.<sup>181</sup> All of these revolts were isolated and effectively repressed, eventually discouraging further attempts by the early 1930s.

**Religious protests.** Relations between the state and ulama broke down soon after Reza's 1926 coronation at which he had professed his support for Islam. When universal conscription was put into effect in 1927 with strict conditions on exemptions for the ulama that included passing a government-sponsored exam, protests erupted in Tehran, Qum, Shiraz, Isfahan, Qazvin and Kirman. The bazaars were closed at Shiraz and Isfahan, and the government resorted to a combination of threats and concessions to stop the agitation, making promises it later broke concerning exemptions and other measures demanded by the ulama. In Tabriz in 1928 further protests were put down by troops and the leaders were banished.<sup>182</sup> Another blow was struck in 1928 with the arrest of Sayyid Hasan Mudarris, Reza's most vocal clerical critic in the majlis. This signal of the end of government concessions to the ulama was reiterated by an incident at Qum in 1928 in which a female member of the shah's family entered the shrine of Fatima and was admonished by a local mulla for improper veiling. Reza is said to have rushed from Tehran to Qum when he heard of this affront to the royal family, strode into the shrine with his boots on and beaten the offending mulla.<sup>183</sup> In 1935 a far greater offense was perpetrated by the shah when he ordered force to be used against a large crowd gathered at the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad who had been listening to a preacher attack the

<sup>180</sup> "Report on the Bakhtiari Tribes," (1928) quoted by Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 142.

<sup>181</sup> Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 84.

<sup>182</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 126, 129; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 152; Mohammad H. Faghfoory, "The Ulama-State Relations in Iran: 1921-1941," pp. 413-432 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 19, number 4 (November 1987), 424-27.

<sup>183</sup> Different versions of this event are found in Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 42; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 127; and Essad-Bey, *Reza Shah*, 184.

European dress code and the unveiling of women. Between four hundred and five hundred people were killed, while others were arrested, banished or executed afterwards.<sup>184</sup> Reza's harsh treatment of religious opposition to his reforms and authority generally compelled the majority of the ulama to remain out of politics in the 1930s, either practicing dissimulation of their attitudes in the face of persecution, or in a few cases going underground, often by retiring to villages where their stands against the government were more popular.<sup>185</sup> Leading ayatollahs however remained aloof from taking political positions, and government repression was successful in eliminating active opposition from the clergy.

**Strikes and the left.** A similar sequence of protests, repression and removal of opposition can be discerned among left-wing opponents of the regime. The trade union movement at first maintained its momentum, celebrating May Day in Tehran in 1927 and 1929, and engaging in a series of strikes between 1928 and 1932. The two most well-known labor actions occurred in the oil industry in 1929 and at the Vatan textile factory at Isfahan in 1931. Accounts of the strike at the Abadan oil refinery vary, with Abrahamian maintaining that 11,000 workers participated, winning wage hikes despite the arrests of 500 strikers by the government, while Floor plays it down as "a storm in a tea-cup, with no lasting influence on labour relations."<sup>186</sup> Floor's own account, which is the fullest discussion, belies his interpretation however. There were organized cells of workers, well-articulated demands, a series of confrontations ending in hundreds of arrests, and a great deal of anxious concern for their position on the part of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. It is true that the repression which followed kept the industry relatively quiet for a decade afterwards, but this does not minimize the place of the strike in Iranian labor history. Two years later five hundred textile workers struck at the Vatan mill in Isfahan, gaining total support from the work force, including children, and winning reduction of the working day from 12 to nine hours, a pay raise of 20 percent, improved treatment by management and better working conditions. Several dozen workers were arrested however and some

<sup>184</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 166-67.

<sup>185</sup> Faghfoory, "The Ulama-State Relations," 427-28.

<sup>186</sup> See Abrahamian, "The Strengths and Weaknesses," 214, and Floor, *Labour Unions*, 44-53.

spent ten years in prison.<sup>187</sup> This kind of response by the state discouraged unions and strike activities, although strikes have been recorded among dockers on the Caspian in 1928, at the Tabriz match factory in 1930, at a Shiraz factory in 1936, several times among railway workers between 1929 and 1937, as well as by students on several occasions between 1934 and 1939. Some of these resulted in concessions but others ended with arrests and defeat.<sup>188</sup> The union movement was on the whole severely repressed in the 1930s, with Reza Shah banning unions, arresting organizers and strictly monitoring meetings of groups larger than three persons (!) by the secret police. Floor ends his study with the judgment that "unionism as a political and social force played no role whatsoever during the 1930s."<sup>189</sup>

Organized left-wing groups met a similar fate. Anti-communist legislation in 1931 made it a crime to organize a party or association "having for its aim the establishment by force of the power of one social class over the other classes, or to overthrow by violence the political, social and economic order of the country."<sup>190</sup> The socialist party of Sulaiman Iskandari was dissolved and its clubs were burned down. The fledgling communist party resisted the regime, which its 1927 congress denounced as one of "feudalists, semicolonialists, and comprador capitalists."<sup>191</sup> The Soviet Union ordered its embassy to break off contacts with Iranian communists in 1929 in order to maintain good relations with Reza Shah. There followed the arrests of some two thousand members or suspected supporters of the Iranian communist party. Some were imprisoned until 1941. Others went to the Soviet Union where several leading Iranian communists died in Stalin's purges. In the mid-1930s a group of left-wing intellectuals led by Dr. Taqi Arani, a physics professor educated in Germany, managed to put out a theoretical journal called *Dunya* (World) which published articles on historical materialism in an academic vein. In 1938 however Arani and a group of others who have become known as "the 53" were tried on charges of being members of a communist party, receiving

<sup>187</sup> Abrahamian, "The Strengths and Weaknesses," 214, and Floor, *Labour Unions*, 53-57.

<sup>188</sup> See Floor, *Labour Unions*, 40-42, 58; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 81-82; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 193; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 154-155; and Abrahamian, "The Strengths and Weaknesses," 214.

<sup>189</sup> Floor, *Labour Unions*, 58.

<sup>190</sup> This bill is quoted in Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 151 note 1.

<sup>191</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 139.

funds from the Soviet Union, conducting propaganda and advocating strikes. Arani died in prison in 1940; others of the 53 emerged after 1941 as leaders of the Tudeh Party, Iran's first mass-based left-wing party.<sup>192</sup> In the Reza Shah period, however, the left was tightly controlled by arrests and censorship. Like the ulama and trade unions it constituted another social force kept under control by a strong, autocratic state.

#### IV.C. The Abdication of Reza Shah

The sudden fall from power of Reza Shah in September 1941 was brought about by the strong application of irresistible world-systemic pressure on his position, coupled with secondary contradictions in his autocratic style of rule. When World War 2 broke out in 1939 Iran immediately declared its neutrality.<sup>193</sup> Iran's dependence on German trade required it to protest Britain's decision to prevent trade between Germany and neutral countries. The period of the German-Soviet pact allowed Iran some breathing space in 1940 and the first part of 1941, as it facilitated a certain amount of trade with Germany across the Soviet Union. German influence in Iran grew with the appointment of the pro-German 'Ali Mansour as prime minister in June 1940 and the presence of a considerable pro-German faction in the Iranian army.

The international equation changed suddenly to Iran's disadvantage when Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. Iran reaffirmed a somewhat disingenuous neutrality in this conflict on June 26 (insincere because there was widespread sympathy for a German victory that would remove the threat of Soviet power in Iran and perhaps even result in the return of parts of the Caucasus lost in 1813 and 1828). The Soviets and the British were now formidably allied, and this put a great deal of pressure on Iran to expel the several hundred Germans in the country who were probable Nazi agents. This demand was formally made by the Allies on July 19 and rejected by Iran ten days later with a note protesting the need for German technicians in industry while promising to keep

<sup>192</sup> On these individuals and events see *ibid.*, 139-40, 155-62; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 187-88; Zabih, *The Left in Contemporary Iran*, 2; and Floor, *Labour Unions*, 58.

<sup>193</sup> For the account of this section generally I have drawn on Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 192-227, and Rezun, *The Iranian Crisis of 1941*, 46-80.

a watchful eye on all German nationals in Iran. Already however there were plans in both England and the Soviet Union for unilateral military intervention in Iran to secure their own interests—British oil in Khuzistan and the Soviet oil fields at Baku—against the Germans. There was in addition the need for the Soviets and British to maintain a secure, year-round line of communications and supplies, and in late July this prompted the formulation of joint planning to invade Iran. By mid-August the decision had been taken.

At this point Iran was in an impossible bind, being asked by England and the Soviet Union to take actions against a Germany that appeared on the verge of crushing the Soviet army and reaching the Iranian border, and by Germany to lend it support and not expel its citizens as the Allies, who for the moment had the strongest position in Iran, were asking. The bind grew tighter when a second Allied note asking for expulsion of most of the Germans was issued on August 16 at the same time as Hitler wrote to Reza to resist this as Germany would occupy the southern Soviet Union by autumn. On August 22 Reza finally ordered the prime minister to expedite removal of non-essential Germans but it was far too late and too little to deter the Anglo-Soviet invasion, which came on the 25th. The Iranian army offered minimal resistance which was quickly overcome.<sup>194</sup> Fighting stopped within a day or two; by September 1 the army had completely disintegrated. Reza Shah was incredulous and his actions indicated the bind he was still caught in: he asked why the Allies had not simply requested what he would have granted (the supply route), and yet when he heard of German broadcasts that Iran stand firm he instructed the newspapers to deny the reports, but not in such a way as to displease the Germans. The reason why England and the Soviets had not stated more clearly their need for a supply route through Iran was because if it had been rejected they would have had to invade anyway, and if accepted, they would have had to contend with an intact, largely pro-German Iranian army.

On September 7, as their armies advanced toward Tehran, Britain and the U.S.S.R. demanded immediate expulsion of all Axis personnel from Iran. The next day the majlis considered a bill to

<sup>194</sup> On the army's collapse see the ironic formulations of Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 135; Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 78; and Rubin, *Paved with Good Intentions*, 18.

strip Reza Shah of his title as commander of the armed forces, a serious blow to his legitimacy. The shah fought back in an editorial in *Ittihad* "that deplored the closing down of all Axis Legations and the severance of diplomatic relations with the Axis governments," stating "our missions in the capitals of those countries will remain as before, and our political relations with them will continue."<sup>195</sup> This determined the Allies on the necessity of Reza's removal. On September 14 the BBC broadcast attacks on the shah in Persian into the country claiming he was a tyrant and a robber. His legitimacy fell beyond repair. Majlis deputies refused to denounce the broadcasts, stating that "the radios had said nothing but the truth and that there was no democracy in Iran."<sup>196</sup> This was accompanied by the threat of the Soviet army advancing to occupy Tehran. Reza Shah now found the moment right to abdicate in favor of his son, Muhammad Reza, with the transfer of power taking place on September 16-17. British and Soviet troops entered the capital on the 17th, and Reza departed, going abroad into exile. His reign—but not his dynasty—had come to an abrupt end.

The Allied invasion put a seal on Iran's continued dependence in the Reza Shah period, which had already been tellingly signalled by the outcome of the 1932-33 oil dispute extending British control an extra 28 years. Reza Shah, so strong internally, was still easily overthrown by external powers. Reza miscalculated the German-Soviet-British equation rather badly and his inability to disentangle himself and his state from an uneasy attraction to the Germans made his downfall inevitable. This was compounded by the autocratic style that made his advisors reluctant to contradict him or provide critically-formulated information. As he told his cabinet at his last meeting with them: "With regard to my plans and ideas, the secret of my success was that I never consulted anyone."<sup>197</sup> This was also a reason for his fall in 1941. More decisively, however, the world-system which had given him an opportunity to rise to power in 1921-25, proved his undoing in 1941. With Reza's abdication, the social forces that he had so assiduously compressed were released, eventually unleashing the social movements that are the subject of Chapter Seven.

<sup>195</sup> Rezun, *The Iranian Crisis of 1941*, 78.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 104 note 259, quoting Hassan Arfa, *Under Five Shahs* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1964), 301. For further evidence on popular attitudes toward the fall of the shah, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 164, 165, 165 note 138.

<sup>197</sup> Quoted by Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 208.

## Chapter Seven

### Democratization, Separatism, Nationalization, Coup:

#### Social Movements from 1941 to 1953

... neither the native government nor the native inhabitants are capable of pursuing a prolonged and formidable policy of hostility toward us.

—Winston Churchill, in the British parliament on June 17, 1914, on why Iran was a particularly suitable source for oil, quoted in Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics*, 242.

\* \* \*

The Government is bound to dispossess at once the former Anglo-Iranian Oil Company under the supervision of the mixed board.

—Article 2 of the bill for the Nationalization of the Oil Industry in Iran (May 1, 1951), in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 322.

\* \* \*

The United States will avoid any unwanted interference in the oil dispute.

—U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, "Report on the Near and Middle East" (June 1, 1953), in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 340.

\* \* \*

The night of the coup, General Zahedi's son, Ardeshir (who later became something of a Washington celebrity as the Shah's ambassador), went up to [CIA officer Howard] Stone at a victory party and said, "We're in.... We're in.... What do we do now?" The Shah himself, after his return, told [CIA agent Kermit] Roosevelt, "I owe my throne to God, my people, my army—and to you!"

—Thomas Powers, "A Book Held Hostage" (review of Kermit Roosevelt's *Countercoup: The Struggle for Control of Iran*), pp. 437-440 in *The Nation*, volume 230, number 14 (April 12, 1980), 438.

The period from 1941 to 1953 brought a second whirlwind of social change to Iran, equal in scope and significance to the earlier events of 1905 to 1925. The Allied occupation undermined the autocratic system of Reza Shah, releasing Iran's pent-up social forces who responded by reviving the press and political organizations and engaged in vigorous social movements after World War 2. In this chapter, we will first assess Iran's experience in the war, and then turn to the attempts of Kurdistan and Azarbaijan to assert their regional and ethnic rights in 1945-46. These events ushered in a new situation of competition for influence in Iran among England, the Soviet Union and the United States, which thus added a built-in international dimension to the explosion of Iran's social forces.

The struggle for control of the state culminated in the 1951-53 oil nationalization movement led by prime minister Muhammad Mussadiq, in which we see the second twentieth-century version of Iran's urban multi-class populist alliance. The complex dynamic of domestic and external forces, and competing ideological orientations and their social bases, once again touched off a massive movement for social change, this time aimed at breaking Iran's dependence on the British in the world-system. These dramatic events afford a second case for analyzing the interplay of the factors involved in social change in Iran—internal class structure, dependent position in the world-economy, the nature of state power, and political cultures of opposition—one which we can compare and contrast with the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11 and the Iranian Revolution that was still yet to come.

## I. Iran in World War 2

The period of World War 2 in Iran, as Nikki Keddie puts it, was one of "ferment"—characterized by growing economic problems, a revival of political debate and activity, and renewed foreign pressures.<sup>1</sup> As in World War 1 Iranians experienced severe economic hardships and dislocation of everyday life. Politically, the new, young shah, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, became only one of several major actors, joined now by a proliferation of parties, newspapers and a new trade union

<sup>1</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 118. Katouzian sums up the 1941-46 period as one of "occupation, instability, conflict, disorder and insecurity": *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 156.

organization. All of this occurred in the context of the Allied occupation, with Soviet troops in the north, British forces in the south and American personnel advising the Iranian government and army in Tehran, as well as transporting supplies to the Soviet Union (see Map 7.1 in Appendix II for their respective military zones). These changes in the internal and international situation of Iran during World War 2 formed the background for the subsequent social movements of 1945-46 and 1951-53. We shall consider the economic, political and international developments in turn.

### **I.A. The Economy**

Iran's 15 million people had a difficult time during World War 2 as their country became a staging area for Allied troops supplying equipment and provisions to the Soviet Union. Despite the Allies' pledge to "disturb as little as possible ... the economic life of the country" and "to use their best endeavors to safeguard the economic existence of the Iranian people against the privations and difficulties arising as a result of the present war," all key economic sectors—agriculture, industry, services, foreign trade, state budget and living standards—were drastically impacted by the occupation.<sup>2</sup>

Agriculture, the backbone of the economy that employed 75 percent of the labor force and accounted for about 50 percent of GDP, saw significant declines in production of the basic crops and livestock levels during the war years as Table 7.1 makes plain. The table registers the decline of all crops, with only certain sectors such as sheep and horses making gains. This slight countervailing trend was due to the relaxation of Reza Shah's disastrous sedentarization campaigns against the tribes, which permitted demographic expansion of pastoralists from the 1930s' low of one million to about two million in the 1940s. In other sectors fruit production dropped 25-30 percent, and the Caspian fisheries' output was down due to overfishing. Productivity in kilograms per hectare of wheat and barley was still less in 1949 than it had been in the 1930s, with rice making only marginal

<sup>2</sup> Quotes are from articles 4 and 7 of the "Treaty of Alliance: Britain and the USSR and Iran" (January 29, 1942), pp. 232-234 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 233-34. Iran's population is estimated to have grown from 14.55 million in 1940 to 15.66 million by 1945, by itself a faint indicator of development: Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 26 table 1.

**Table 7.1**  
**Agricultural Output in Iran, 1935-1944**  
 (annual averages of crops in thousands of metric tons,  
 livestock in thousands of head)

Item	1935-1939	1940-1944	Percent Change
Wheat	1,870	1,400	-25
Barley	790	600	-24
Rice	390	350	-10
Cotton	38	23	-39
Tobacco	15	14	-7
Cattle	2,920	2,660	-9
Sheep	14,000	15,500	+11
Horses	305	380	+25
Mules	52	51	-2
Asses	1,180	1,150	-3

Source: Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 134 table 1, 135 table 2, calculations mine.

gains. The shortfall in production was compounded by the great demands for food from the occupying armies, resulting in serious famine in "Khuzistan, Khorasan, Baluchistan, and Kerman (all of Iran except for Azerbaijan, Gilan and Mazanderan in the Soviet zone and Kurdistan under joint Anglo-Soviet occupation)."<sup>3</sup>

Industry likewise felt the pinch of war, contributing its share to the overall drop in Iran's GNP from perhaps 180 billion rials to 150 billion between 1941 and 1945. While Floor's data shows an increase in industrial companies from 460 to 635 and of industrial capital from 527 million rials to 1.505 billion between 1939/40 and 1944/45 (which in real terms represented an increase from only \$28.7 million to \$46 million in capital, due to rapid depreciation of the currency), most other data on industry point to a decline, relatively if not absolutely. The establishment of large (more than ten workers!) modern factories slowed to two per year during the war, after averaging eight a year in the 1930s. The leading sector—textiles—slowed due to difficulties in procuring replacements for spare

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Lee McFarland, "The Crises in Iran, 1941-1947: A Society in Change and the Peripheral Origins of the Cold War," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin (1981), 143. Other data in this paragraph is drawn from *ibid.*, 142; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 31, 59-60, 131; and "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 409, based on I. I. Korobeynikov, *Iran: Ekonomika i Vneshnyaya Torgovlya* [Iran: Economy and Foreign Trade] (Moscow, 1954).

parts and new machinery. Heavily dependent on German-supplied equipment in the 1930s, many factories fell into disrepair. Cancellation of textile orders by the Allies in 1944 led to layoffs and labor protests at Isfahan. No new electricity capacity was installed between 1940 and 1943. State industries were ignored, partly on the recommendation of American economic adviser Arthur Millspaugh.<sup>4</sup>

One urban activity which appears to have prospered during the war was the commercial sector of merchants and speculators. While small and medium merchants probably suffered in many cases from the general dislocation of the economy, some large merchants were well-placed to capture windfall profits. The number of registered commercial companies grew from 1,275 in 1939/40 to 1,560 in 1944/45, and their capital from 1.34 billion rials (\$73.1 million) to 2.35 billion rials (only \$72.3 million in real terms). In Tehran merchant concerns had a higher average capital than industrial ones. Expenditures on commercial buildings for 1940-45 came to 2.6 billion rials, while industrial plants attracted only 81 million rials in this period. One sector where speculators thrived was in diverting the carpet market from the provinces to Tehran. More generally, as middlemen between the local markets and Allied wartime needs the merchant community found a lucrative niche in an otherwise deteriorating economy.<sup>5</sup>

These activities formed part of the larger pattern of Iran's foreign trade and its related service sector. The 1942 Treaty of Alliance gave the Allies "the unrestricted right to use, maintain, guard and, in the case of military necessity, control in any way that they may require all means of communication throughout Iran, including railways, roads, rivers, aerodromes, ports, pipelines, and telephone, telegraph and wireless installations," and to furnish and recruit labor for the above facilities.<sup>6</sup> Demand for workers on the railroad, in the oil industry, in construction and in all manner of service activities increased. The British alone employed 75,000 Iranians during the war. The consequences

<sup>4</sup> Data in this paragraph is drawn from Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 3 chart (for the very rough estimates of GNP); Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 34 table 13; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 173 table 1, 175 table 2, 219 table 1; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 115-17; Rey, "Persia in Perspective-2," 80; and McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 148-49, 152-53.

<sup>5</sup> See Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 34 table 13; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 235 table 8; and Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism," 296ff.

<sup>6</sup> Text in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 233 (article 3).

were however far from solely beneficial. The key item—use of the railroad—was valued by Mussadiq (then a majlis representative) at \$140 million during this period, but the Allies offered Iran only \$5.2 million for its use. They provided \$21 million worth of repairs, maintenance, equipment and services, but Iran still lost over \$100 million by this arrangement. Oil production burgeoned from 6.6 million tons in 1941 to 16.8 million in 1945, while British payments remained at four million pounds sterling for 1940-43 and increased to only 5.62 million pounds by 1945. Foreign trade was another area in which the Allies exploited Iran, acquiring their supplies at rock-bottom rates by devaluing Iran's currency, printing money and granting themselves credits. The devaluations alone gave the Allies double value for their purchases. Iran's ability to import dropped precipitously, undermining industry's needs for capital goods and consumers' for finished products, which simply were no longer available on the world market. Exports, especially of oil, remained high, to meet Allied needs. Iran thus accumulated a huge trade surplus during the war of about \$50 million a year, but much of it wasn't paid to Iran, remaining instead in England and the Soviet Union. By war's end, Iran's reserves in Moscow came to \$12 million in gold and \$8 million in currency, which were kept frozen there, out of reach.<sup>7</sup>

The state's budget deficit therefore grew, from \$38 million in 1941/42 to \$50 million in June 1943, after having been balanced throughout the 1930s. Customs revenues declined as trade fell, and taxes, particularly from large landlords, proved difficult to collect, as always, though greater sums were generated than in the past. Iran meanwhile obtained no loans during the war period.<sup>8</sup>

These economic developments had a harsh impact on the population, especially in the cities. The most ready measure of this is the hyperinflation experienced in the first years of the war due to the distortions caused by Allied consumption, shortages of basic goods and forced devaluations of the currency. Table 7.2 documents this trend for the consumer price index and its principal

<sup>7</sup> Stephen L. McFarland, "Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd: the Tehran Bread Riot of December 1942," pp. 51-65 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 17, number 1 (February 1985), 55; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 142-43; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 54 table 6, 105 table 1, 107 table 2, 115 table 6, 157 table 3, 158 table 4; McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 135, 137.

<sup>8</sup> Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 200; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 66 table 2, 69, 76 table 5; McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 138.

components.<sup>9</sup> The table shows a sevenfold

Table 7.2  
Consumer Price Index and its Components, 1936-1948  
(1959 = 100)

Year	General Index	Food	Rent	Fuel/Water	Clothing
1936	6.6	7.4	2.8	14.2	9.5
1937	8.0	8.8	3.3	17.2	11.5
1938	8.7	9.4	4.1	17.9	12.4
1939	9.4	9.8	4.5	19.4	13.9
1940	10.7	11.2	5.4	19.6	15.9
1941	16.0	18.5	6.1	26.2	24.3
1942	31.4	38.4	10.1	48.8	47.6
1943	66.1	79.6	20.2	109.0	105.8
1944	67.9	75.8	27.2	92.6	123.2
1945	58.1	56.6	31.0	82.8	87.2
1946	51.4	57.4	28.9	70.9	71.5
1947	54.8	60.2	32.5	69.6	78.6
1948	60.9	69.2	37.1	69.8	78.0

Source: This table is part of that in Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 48 table 4.

increase in prices between 1940 and 1944, when an American-devised stabilization plan took effect and halted the rise (though prices remained at a high level after the war). The consequences of the inflation were shortages of staple items on the official government-regulated markets and the creation of a thriving black market which became equal in scope and importance to the regular economy. Thus sugar was rationed at 8 rials (\$0.25) a kilogram in mid-1944, but could be bought in any amount for 133 rials (\$4.12) on the black market, while tea was sold officially at 40 rials (\$1.24) a kilogram but at 400 rials (\$12.40) in the underground economy. Tires were the most valuable item, fetching \$2,000 each in Tehran in 1942. Aspirin could not be found on the official market but glutted the black market.<sup>10</sup>

The most serious wartime shortage was in the bread supply. This was due to Allied requirements, the difficulties of finding transport ships to send grain to Iran and Soviet use of Azarbaijan's

<sup>9</sup> Other indexes on the C.P.I., wholesale price index and money supply can be found in Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 46-47 table 3, 80-81 table 6, 82 table 7, and Dadgah, "The Inflationary Process of the Iranian Economy," 389 table 1.

<sup>10</sup> McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 134, 138, 140.

surplus for its own population. In Tehran bread prices skyrocketed on the open market from six cents to one dollar in the first half of 1942. When Ahmad Qavam became prime minister in August 1942 he held up a piece of bread at his news conference and said simply, "This is my program. If I can put bread of good quality in the hand of all Iranians, other problems will be easy to solve."<sup>11</sup> Shortages became acute in the autumn, however, and the quality of bread declined as bakers sifted out flour for good bread to sell the rich, and mixed cinders, pebbles, dirt and sawdust into the bread of the poor. The crisis culminated on December 8-9, 1942 when bread rations were lowered, prompting thousands of demonstrators, many of them students and women with small children, to converge on the majlis, crying, "You may kill us, but we must have bread." Troops were called out to contain the looting that followed and 20 people were killed, 700 wounded and 156 arrested, with \$150,000 damage done to the bazaar. There were disturbances elsewhere over bread prices and shortages in 1942 and 1943 before Allied shipments and government measures brought the food supply situation under control.<sup>12</sup>

The final result of these economic trends was a perceptible deterioration in the standard of living for the urban lower and middle classes during World War 2. The Reverend W. J. Thompson noted in 1947:

The whole situation has been affected by the steep rise in the cost of living which has brought great hardship to the majority, while the very rich do not feel the pinch and so get further out of touch with the true situation. There is no serious shortage of food or other essentials of life. But still a great proportion are poor, ill-fed and in rags.... Such things as sugar at 20s. to 25s. per lb. and tea at a similar price mean that the poor man is reduced to the bare limit and often goes hungry.<sup>13</sup>

Income inequality grew as merchants, speculators and the urban upper classes found ways to profit from the crisis, while the rest of the population was hard hit by the inflation and shortages.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in McFarland, "Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd," 54.

<sup>12</sup> This account draws on *ibid.*, *passim*, and McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 146-48. McFarland thinks the Tehran riot was not motivated solely by hunger but rather was attributable to elite intrigues, variously on the part of the shah, Qavam, bazaar merchants or the British. He also sees it as a nationalistic, popular, anti-elite, anti-government action, but at the same time calls it "pseudo-popular," not a revolution, and indicative of "the power and efficacy of the elite in Iran": "Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd," 62. The most plausible explanation appears to be that the shah used the very real food shortage to incite riots that would permit him to dismiss Qavam and declare martial law, as McFarland has argued in "A Peripheral View of the Origins of the Cold War. The Crises in Iran, 1941-47," pp. 333-351 in *Diplomatic History*, volume 4, number 4 (Fall 1980), 340.

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, "Conditions of Daily Life in Iran, 1947," 205.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 118, citing T. Cuyler Young, "The National and International Relations

## **I.B. Political Developments**

If the Allied occupation had primarily negative consequences for Iran's economy, its impact on the political system had more positive effects. In fact, in releasing the social forces which Reza Shah had compressed (by forcing the latter's abdication), the Allies opened up the political arena to new groups and actors over whom they had less than full control, and who proceeded to engage in political struggles and lay the groundwork for significant social movements in the postwar period.

The political process expanded well beyond the shah to include a range of independent institutions and social actors—including the cabinet, majlis, parties, labor movement, ulama and tribes. Muhammad Reza Shah's power base was in the army (and to a lesser extent the conservative and royalist parliamentary factions and their press). Dealt a crushing blow by the Allied invasion, the Iranian army was slowly rebuilt from its low of 65,000 men (down from 124,000 under Reza Shah) back to 80,000 by mid-1943. The old chain of command was kept intact as the new shah cultivated the officer corps, creating twice as many generals and colonels in two years as his father had in his entire reign. The shah continued to propose prime ministers, but these were now subject to votes of confidence in the majlis, and the 1941-53 period saw 12 prime ministers come and go, nine of whom were titled members of the old Qajar elite, two bureaucrats under Reza Shah and one a member of Reza's military elite. Their governments produced 31 cabinets involving 148 ministers, of whom 81 were titled, 13 court bureaucrats, 11 officers, eight non-bazaar businessmen and only 15 from the new professional/salaried class (the intelligentsia).<sup>15</sup> In other words the old elite remained fairly entrenched at the cabinet level, somewhat to the shah's advantage.

The majlis emerged for the first time since the pre-1925 period as an independent power center. Though elections remained subject in large measure to the control of the shah, army, large landlords and the foreign embassies, there was a gradual democratization of the system in the 1940s. The thirteenth majlis (1941-43) had been "prepared" by Reza Shah before his abdication, and so proved willing to compromise with the new shah, letting him control the army if he did not dictate in politics.

of Iran," in Young, editor, *Near Eastern Culture and Society* (Princeton, 1951), 202.

<sup>15</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 170, 177-78.

Its main factions were the pro-shah National Unionists, the largest bloc, consisting of Reza Shah-era landlords, tribal chiefs and a few ulama; the conservative pro-British Patriotic Caucus of southern landlords and merchants; the small Azerbaijan Caucus of titled Qajar landowners opposed to the shah and British and willing to work with the Soviets; and the pro-American Justice Caucus composed of older generation intellectuals who had grown disenchanted with Reza Shah's dictatorship and now sought to bring the army under civilian control.<sup>16</sup> These essentially elite "parties" made various deals and coalitions among themselves resulting in a series of prime ministers and cabinets from 1941 to 1943.

The line-up of social forces in the majlis became broader and the conflicts more acute during the fourteenth majlis from 1944 to 1946. While the elections were still manipulated by vested interests, Abrahamian has called them "the most prolonged, the most competitive, and hence the most meaningful of all elections in modern Iran, particularly in the urban areas where landlords could not control the results."<sup>17</sup> The body that resulted was similar in its conservative landed social composition to previous ones, but with 60 new deputies out of 126 elected. It divided itself into seven major factions:

1. National Union Caucus—royalist, with about 30 deputies (20 landlords, four civil servants, three ulama, two businessmen, one lawyer), of whom 13 had been in Reza Shah's majlises.
2. Patriotic Caucus—conservative, pro-British, with 26 deputies (13 landlords, five merchants who traded with Britain, three journalists, three civil servants, one lawyer, one mulla). Sayyid Zia al-Din Tabataba'i, the journalist who had helped organize Reza Khan's 1921 coup and then spent twenty years in exile, was a member, and a staunch religious conservative, pro-British in orientation.
3. Democrat Caucus—conservative, pro-tribal interests, allied with the Patriots, numbering 11 deputies led by two Bakhtiari chiefs.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-81.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-87. For various more negative judgments on the elections see Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 117; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 99; and Farhad Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh. A Political Biography* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 78.

4. **Liberal Caucus**—anti-court liberals from the Soviet-occupied zone, with 20 deputies (12 titled landlords, two ulama persecuted by Reza Shah, four merchants trading with the Soviet Union), favoring closer ties with the U.S.S.R.
5. **Tudeh (Masses) Party**—which worked with the Liberals, with eight deputies (all younger intellectuals, five imprisoned by Reza Shah as Marxists), whose organization will be analyzed more extensively below.
6. **Independent Caucus**—heir to the Justice Caucus, with 15 members, stressing independence of the shah and landed class internally, and of Britain and the Soviet Union externally.
7. **Individuals Caucus**—16 deputies, five of them moderate professionals associated with the Iran Party, and two intellectuals of the Comrades Party, and including Muhammad Mussadiq, the Qajar landowner who had opposed Reza Shah's rise to the throne in 1925 and now stood for an independent foreign policy, civil control of the army and fair elections.

These parties differed on the major issues facing Iran, with the Patriots and Democrats pro-British, the Tudeh and Liberals pro-Soviet, the Independents and National Unionists pro-U.S. and the Individuals non-aligned in foreign policy; the Tudeh, Individuals and sometimes the Independents working for social reforms domestically; and all but the National Unionists pressing for civilian control of the army.<sup>18</sup>

The most well-organized and numerous of these organizations was the Tudeh (its full name was the Hizb-i Tudeh-i Iran, or Party of the Iranian Masses). The Tudeh was founded just thirteen days after Reza Shah abdicated in September 1941 by 27 younger members of the famous "53" imprisoned Marxists in the late 1930s. Most commentators agree that the Tudeh in the 1941-47 period was a broad-based organization of progressives and radicals, some of whom were Marxists and communists, but that the party itself was neither the direct descendant of the original Iranian Communist Party of the 1920s, or organizationally and ideologically a true communist party.<sup>19</sup> In

<sup>18</sup> This line-up of political forces is based on Abrahamian's lucid discussion: *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 186-203.

the war years, the Tudeh's leadership was three-fourths intellectuals, one-fourth working class; its social base was the reverse (one-fourth intellectuals, three-fourths workers, artisans and craftspeople, with perhaps two percent peasants). The party grew rapidly in size from 6,000 members in 1942 to 25,000 in 1944 to 50,000 core members and 100,000 active supporters by 1946, making it by far Iran's largest political force and indeed its only large, well-organized party. The 1943 party program made appeals to workers with labor reforms, peasants with land reform, and artisans, intellectuals, women and students with calls for political rights and job security. It also advocated national independence from foreign domination and constitutional rule internally.<sup>20</sup>

A related progressive force that developed close ties with the Tudeh was the revived labor movement. Strikes involving more than fifty workers grew from three in 1941 (typical of the Reza Shah period), to 37 in 1942, 28 in 1943, 57 in 1944, 44 in 1945 and a peak of 183 in 1946 (a year of tremendous social upheaval discussed in section II below). These were at first spontaneous, local strikes such as those in the Isfahan and Yazd textile mills in 1943 and 1944. On May 1, 1944 four labor confederations merged to form the Central Council of Federated Trade Unions of Iranian Workers and Toilers (C.C.F.T.U), led by veteran labor organizers mostly from the working class and members of "the 53." The C.C.F.T.U. grew by 1946 to claim a membership of 335,000 workers, including industrial labor, craftspeople, artisans, professionals and unskilled wage earners and service sector employees. Its organizing issues were primarily economic—an eight-hour day, pensions, paid vacations, sick pay, unemployment insurance, equal pay for women, ban on child labor and job safety—but it represented a formidable political force as well, demanding the right to form unions, bargain collectively and to strike.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> While Wilber implies that the Tudeh was directed by Soviet-trained Iranian communists as early as 1942 (see *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 188 note 6), Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 147, stresses its heterogeneity, and Abrahamian notes that the British ambassador found no real links between the Tudeh and the Soviet Union in 1946 (despite the closeness of their political positions); *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 304; see also 290, 304 note 48.

<sup>20</sup> This paragraph is based on the account in Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 284ff. See also Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 98.

<sup>21</sup> Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 215-16, 227; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 292-93, 303-2; McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 151-53.

Other groups and classes which returned to political activity in the war years included the ulama, lutis and tribes. Though the most prominent cleric, Sayyid Abu'l-Hasan Isfahani (died 1945) "held aloof from politics," many ulama joined political parties and prepared the ground for a more active role in postwar politics. Religious expression in the form of the celebration of the Muharram passion plays was allowed to revive, and prime minister Sohaili in 1943 brought ulama into higher profiles in the judiciary and educational systems which Reza Shah had so thoroughly secularized.<sup>22</sup>

As ulama power grew, the status of women accordingly regressed in terms of the secular legislation of the 1930s. There was a general return on the part of urban middle and lower class women to the veil, although McFarland reports elements of variation and struggle over the issue:

In Tehran women continued to appear freely in public without the *chadur* throughout the war. In Esfahan almost all women wore the *chadur*, but rather than the formal *chadur-i siah* [black veil], they preferred the less formal and less forboding *chadur-i namaz* [prayer veil] of light colored cloth. The face mask did not return to popular use. Early in the war fifteen of the highest ulama in Iran issued a *fatva* forbidding women to appear in bazaars and other public places without a *chadur*. The *fatva* was not universally accepted.<sup>23</sup>

I have not seen much data on other aspects of women's lives in this period, but one may infer that the gains of the Reza Shah legislation were not fully reversed, and that in particular, women continued to participate in the educational system at increasing numbers at all levels.

Another urban group which may be briefly mentioned is the lutis (now called the *chaqukashan*, "knife-wielders")—the young lower-class urban toughs who had participated in street demonstrations in the Qajar period but who were more tightly controlled by the state in the Qajar period. Active in the 1942 bread riots, they became mainstays of the urban political scene, retaining some of their Islamic sentiments and neighborhood patron-client affiliations, but now payable more strictly in cash. They would be a force to reckon with in the oil nationalization struggle, mobilized by the royalists in the 1953 coup.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> On the ulama see Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth-century Iran," 203, 204; Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 63; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 184. I have also drawn on Hamid Algar's 1982 lectures at Berkeley on Islam in Iran.

<sup>23</sup> McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 130.

<sup>24</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 183 note 34; McFarland, "Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd," 61.

Finally, the tribes too resumed their former economic and political activities in a general resurgence of independence after 1941. Demographic renewal, resumption of migration patterns (by some, not all), widespread re-arming and reorganization in some cases under their former chiefs were the order of the day. Tribal revolts against the government, sometimes with German support, peaked in 1942-43, after which certain khans were appeased with appointments as local governors, election to the majlis or financial arrangements with the British. The Kurds would play a major role in their region in 1945-46, however, as would southern tribes like the Bakhtiari and Qashqa'i in postwar political events.<sup>25</sup>

Taken together, these trends and organizations allowed hitherto unimaginable expression to Iran's underlying social forces, which would be articulated in several explosive social movements between 1945 and 1953, borne by new variations of the multi-class populist alliance.

#### **I.C. From World War to Cold War: The Foreign Powers in Iran**

The final factor in the political-economic equation was, of course, the external forces acting on Iran in this period. Iran's strategic importance to the Allies had prompted the joint British-Soviet invasion in August 1941, and concern with winning the war against Germany forced Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States to cooperate closely in Iran through 1944, after which tensions began to arise among the powers that continued into the postwar period and ultimately played a major role in determining the form and outcome of the social movements that occurred. Let us briefly consider the relations of Iran with each of the powers in turn, and then examine their growing conflict with each other in the latter stages of the war by focussing on the divisive issue of oil concessions.

Britain remained the preeminent foreign economic actor in Iran by virtue of its control of the oil industry, which pumped large amounts of oil and profits out of Iran into the war effort. Britain

<sup>25</sup> On the tribes during World War 2, see Thompson, "Conditions of Daily Life in Iran, 1946," 204; Abrahamsian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 173-75; Garthwaite, *Khans and shahs*, 139-40; Beck, "Economic Transformations Among Qashqa'i Nomads," 100; Barker, "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i," 144; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 95-96; and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 115.

and British India provided 32 percent of Iran's imports for 1940-44 and took 19 percent of non-oil exports. Politically too the British possessed great influence among conservative tribal leaders, newspaper editors, certain of the ulama and other monarchist and anti-communist groups, especially Zia al-Din's misnamed National Will party. Military occupation of southern Iran afforded wide scope for influencing elections there. As Sir Reader Bullard, Britain's ambassador, reported candidly in 1942: "...we were obliged to interfere frequently and radically in the local administration ... there was a time when we used to wonder whether in the end we might not have to take over the country ... we have succeeded in establishing a number of Persian governments."<sup>26</sup>

The Soviet Union likewise used its occupation of northern Iran to rebuild its influence in the country to new levels after the loss of much ground in the 1930s to Germany and Britain. Trade reached 21 percent of Iran's non-oil exports and 17 percent of imports for 1940-44, almost a dead heat with the United States for the position of second trading partner after Britain. The Soviet trade deficit with Iran totalled \$20 million by the end of the war, and was not repaid, leading to strained relations between the two countries and damaging Iran's economy well into the Mussadiq period. A second problem was Soviet appropriation of Azarbaijan's grain surplus in 1942, contributing to the famine conditions in Tehran. This was belatedly made up by release of 25,000 tons of grain in 1943; the Soviets also built hospitals, roads and wells in Iran during the war.<sup>27</sup>

World War 2 was the turning point for the American presence in Iran. Thirty thousand troops arrived in December 1942 to assure transport of massive amounts of lend-lease supplies to the Soviet Union. In 1943 the U.S. sent a military mission under Colonel Norman Schwartzkopf and an economic team under Dr. Arthur A. Millspaugh to restructure Iran's military and finances at the

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 79. Cf. the following account as well: "... when Alan Trout, a capable British diplomat who later became consul-general in Khuzistan and Fars, complained that an Iranian minister was not cooperating, Sir Reader, in his soft voice and unemotional style, replied, "Then, change him" ": Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East. Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 155 note 66. See also Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 113 table 5; Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 24ff.; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 115. It is symbolically significant that British foreign secretary Anthony Eden rather insultingly announced that the country was to be referred to—against Iranian wishes—in the West as "Persia," not "Iran": Elwell-Sutton, "Reza Shah the Great," 3.

<sup>27</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 113 table 5; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 415; McFarland, "Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd," 57, 60; McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 137.

request of prime minister Qavam. Under Schwartzkopf's wide powers the Iranian army and Imperial Gendarmerie were fashioned into a 90,000-man force, with a marked improvement in esprit de corps. Meanwhile, U.S. trade with Iran doubled from eight percent of non-oil exports in 1935-39 to 17 percent in 1940-44 and from ten to 20 percent of exports. Despite the unpopularity of Millspaugh's initiatives with landlords and nationalists alike (these included price controls, rationing, effective income taxes, reducing the budget and securing a treasury loan), the notion of using aid and involvement in Iran to achieve postwar objectives took hold in Washington in this period. The larger context was an emerging American policy goal of achieving a new international economic order to avert a relapse into the 1930s' depression by taking measures to ensure the free movement of capital—both raw materials and finished manufactures—internationally rather than returning to the exclusive trading block that had existed prior to the war. In January 1944 Millspaugh outlined a 20-year program for the use of American aid, arguing:

... Iran, because of its situation, its problems, and its friendly feelings toward the United States, is (or can be made) something in the nature of a clinic—an experiment station—for the President's post-war policies—his aim to develop and stabilize backward areas; that the present American effort in Iran is actually a means of implementing these policies, a means of helping nations to help themselves, with negligible cost and risk to the United States; and that a similar effort might well be made in other regions.<sup>28</sup>

President Roosevelt responded to the suggestion (made by General Patrick Hurley) that the United States urge Iran to develop "a pattern of self-government and free enterprise," by saying he was "rather thrilled with the idea of using Iran as an example of what we could do by an unselfish American policy."<sup>29</sup> There was much mutual interest on the side of the Iranian state in nurturing closer ties with the U.S. to offset British and Russian interference and to control domestic social movements. Prime minister Sohaili sought American governmental and business contacts with Iran, while the shah confidentially told the American minister in 1943 that "he would prefer that Allied forces

<sup>28</sup> From a letter of Millspaugh to Harry Hopkins, January 11, 1944, quoted in T. H. Vail Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1952), 445 note 14. Interestingly, already in late 1942, when Millspaugh was first approached for the post of economic adviser by Iran he was encouraged by the U.S. government to accept: "I was informed ... that the United States after the war was to play a large role in that region with respect to oil, commerce, and air transport, and that a big program was under way": Millspaugh, *Americans in Persia*, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Memo of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to Secretary of State Hull, January 12, 1944, quoted in Motter, *The Persian Corridor*, 445.

remain in Iran to prevent a revolution against the monarchy, at least until he could rebuild his army and gain an upper hand in the domestic power struggle."<sup>30</sup>

Iran's growing closeness to the United States created problems for both the British and the Soviet Union in the latter stages of the war, touching off an initially delicate but increasingly acrimonious three-way competition for hegemony in Iran. In July 1943 the British formally complained to the U.S. State Department about "an impression, however false, that there may be some desire on the American side to supplant British traders in the established and traditional markets, not only for the war period, but permanently thereafter."<sup>31</sup> A wider conflict came out into the open over the issue of new oil concessions. The British Royal Dutch-Shell in late 1943, and the American Socony-Vacuum and Sinclair oil companies in early 1944 opened talks with Iran regarding concessions in the southeast. After word of this was leaked by a majlis member in August 1944, the Soviets began to insist on their "rights" to a northern oil concession (see Map 7.1 for approximate areas involved). In late 1944, the majlis, on Mussadiq's initiative, passed a bill prohibiting cabinet ministers from discussing or negotiating any petroleum concession with a foreign country, and this forced the Iranian government to suspend all talks on oil until after the war.<sup>32</sup>

Confrontation among the United States and Great Britain on one side, and the Soviets on the other, now became acute. Throughout 1945 the Soviets conducted propaganda castigating their Western allies; while U.S. troops left Iran in December 1945 and the British withdrew in February 1946 in compliance with treaty obligations to evacuate within six months of the war's end, the Soviets retained their forces in the north. In conjunction with movements for autonomy in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan declared in December 1945, this action touched off the round of postwar social movements in Iran and led to the first battle of the Cold War. These events form the subject of

<sup>30</sup> McFarland, "A Peripheral View," 340. Other data in this paragraph are based on *ibid.*, 337; Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 15-19; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 237-38; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 114-16; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108 table 3, 113 table 5; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 184; and Ashraf, "Iran," 109 note 1.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted by Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 16.

<sup>32</sup> See "Iranian Law Prohibiting the Grant of Oil Concessions to Foreigners and its Effect" (December 2, 1944-15 January 1945), pp. 241-245 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II; McFarland, "A Peripheral View," 341-43; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 210; and Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 81.

section II of this chapter.

## **II. Social Movements in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan, 1945-46**

The postwar movements for autonomy in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan were the first tests of the potential for new social movements in the changing domestic and international environments of post-Reza Shah Iran. As such they present challenging cases for our theories of social change, not only with respect to the roles played by internal and external factors, but, insofar as they were provincial rather than national in scope, to see how well a basically class analysis can deal with instances of social movements motivated by important ethnic and regional grievances.

### **II.A. Background to Rebellion**

On December 12, 1945 a locally-chosen provincial assembly led by the Democratic Party of Azarbaijan under Jafar Pishivari declared the establishment of the "Autonomous Government of Azarbaijan" at Tabriz. The local dialect of Azari Turkish was proclaimed the official language and equality of rights for all the peoples inhabiting Azarbaijan—Azaris, Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians—was demanded. Then on December 17 a crowd marched on the department of justice at the town of Mahabad in Kurdistan, shot the Iranian coat of arms off its façade and raised the Kurdish flag on the roof. On January 22, 1946 the local religious leader Qazi Muhammad declared the "Autonomous Republic of Kurdistan" at Mahabad (for the territorial extent of these two regional governments, see Maps 7.2 and 7.3 in Appendix II). In both cases Iranian forces were powerless to intervene because the 30,000 Soviet soldiers still occupying Azarbaijan made it impossible for them to enter the area.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> On these events see Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 20; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 319-20; William Eagleton, Jr., *The Kurdish Republic of 1946* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 61-63; William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East 1945-1951. Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 70; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 221, who also records a movement of armed rebels in the Caspian area in late 1945 seeking to revive the Jangali rebellion.

Meanwhile in Tehran Ahmad Qavam again became prime minister, in February 1946, despite the shah's objections, chosen as the only person capable of getting the Soviets to withdraw. Qavam went to Moscow to negotiate, returning only on the last day of the fourteenth majlis in mid-March, which Tudeh-organized demonstrators prevented from reaching a quorum and possibly extending its session. The majlis thus dissolved, and as no new assembly was convened until mid-1947, it played no role in the key events of 1946.<sup>34</sup>

Rather than their agreed-upon evacuation, Soviet armored troops *advanced* into Azarbaijan in early March. This touched off an international crisis, although the extent of these maneuvers was certainly exaggerated by the American consul at Tabriz and the Iranian government (for the consul's perception, see Map 7.3). The United States protested vigorously, Iran lodged a complaint at the newly established United Nations and by early April Qavam successfully negotiated an agreement whereby the troops would be withdrawn and the Soviet Union would be granted an oil concession in the north (subject however to ratification by the as yet unelected majlis). Tehran agreed to withdraw its grievance at the U.N. and to negotiate with the Pishivari government in Azarbaijan. Soviet troops began to evacuate Iran on April 22 and had left altogether by May 10.<sup>35</sup>

In June 1946 Qavam reached an agreement with the Azarbaijan Democrats granting most of the province's demands regarding use of the local language, retention of tax revenues and progressive social reforms administered by the provincial assembly, while the latter acknowledged that Azarbaijan was part of Iran. Kurdistan was mentioned only in passing and implicitly assumed to be

<sup>34</sup> For two views on these events, see Faramarz S. Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran. The Background History of Russian and Anglo-American Conflict in Iran, Its Effects on Iranian Nationalism, and the Fall of the Shah* (South Brunswick and New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1980), 108, and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 222-24.

<sup>35</sup> McFarland, "A Peripheral View," 345-47; Robert Rossow, Jr., "The Battle of Azerbaijan, 1946," pp. 17-32 in *Middle East Journal*, volume X, number 1 (Winter 1956), 17-26. The amount of American pressure exerted on the Soviet Union in this incident is a matter of debate: McFarland and Abrahamian deny that there was an ultimatum to Stalin or a threat to use nuclear weapons, while Daniel Ellsberg says it was the first occasion on which such a threat was made. See McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 436; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 228 note 4, citing J. Thorpe, "Truman's Ultimatum to Stalin in 1946: Fact or Fantasy?" pp. 8-10 in *Newsletter of the Society for Iranian Studies*, volume 4 (October 1972); and *The Pentagon Papers*. There is no doubt however that major force was brought to bear, at least implicitly, on both the American and Soviet sides. On the comparatively generous terms of the proposed oil concession (essentially a 49-51 percent profit-sharing arrangement), see "Iranian-Soviet Dispute Before the UN Security Council and the Proposed Oil Agreement" (April 2-4, 1946), pp. 261-264 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II.

linked with the Azarbaijan dispute. A temporary truce was thus in effect between Tehran and its rebellious northwestern provinces.<sup>36</sup>

## **II.B. The Nature of the Autonomous "Republics"**

Here we will examine the situations in Kurdistan and Azarbaijan in 1945 and 1946, looking at the organization of the autonomy movements, their aims and program, grievances, social base, accomplishments and problems.

**Azarbaijan.** Azarbaijan, it will be recalled, provided much of the radical impetus behind the Constitutional Revolution, and had declared a short-lived separatist state named Azadistan ("Land of Freedom") after World War I under Shaikh Khiabani. During the 1930s this populous commercial and agricultural province continued to stagnate as Tehran grew at its expense. Local grievances included the right to use Azari Turkish in schools, government and the press; to retain its own tax revenues (the 1944-45 budget allocated Tehran 20 times more funds than Azarbaijan, despite the latter having three times the population); to elect its own local and provincial governing bodies; and to carry out progressive reforms in such areas as compulsory education and land distribution. Fuel was added to the fire during the 1943-44 majlis elections when the supreme electoral council refused to accept Tabriz's winning candidates, Jafar Pishivari (a Communist from the post-1918 era imprisoned between 1930 and 1941) and a Tudeh member, because they advocated autonomy for the province.<sup>37</sup>

In September 1945 Pishivari formed the Democratic Party of Azarbaijan (DPA) with veterans of the early communist movement and the Khiabani revolt. Shortly thereafter the local branches of the Tudeh and the C.C.F.T.U. trade union movement voted independently of their organizations in Tehran to join the DPA. In mid-October a "nearly bloodless revolt" began as DPA-armed volunteers known as *fida'is* seized local governments throughout Azarbaijan under cover of the

<sup>36</sup> Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 94; Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran*, 138-39; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 120.

<sup>37</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 175-76, 198, 208; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 150; Wilber, *Riza Shah Pahlavi*, 139-40 note 10; David B. Nissman, *The Soviet Union and Iranian Azerbaijan. The Use of Nationalism for Political Penetration* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), 16.

Soviet occupying forces. In November the DPA convened a National Congress of Azarbaijan and on December 12, 1945 the National Majlis met at Tabriz with 100 members, almost all from the DPA, electing Pishivari as "prime minister" and declaring the formation of the Autonomous Government of Azarbaijan.<sup>38</sup>

The program of the DPA called for freedom and autonomy in Azarbaijan within the national territory of Iran; support for democracy, constitutional government and local self-rule; use of Azari in schools and administration; protection of minorities' and women's rights; and economic measures aimed at reducing unemployment, distributing land and retaining provincial tax revenues.<sup>39</sup> Though some historians have stressed its separatist dimension, the main thrust of the DPA program, statements and actions was for local autonomy and cultural self-determination inside the Iranian state. Thus, it never used the term "Democratic Republic of Azarbaijan" as some historians later did, and indeed "dropped the terms National Majles, Autonomous Government, cabinet minister, and prime minister in favor of Provincial Assembly, Provincial Council, department head, and governor-general," nor did it ever appoint a minister of war or foreign affairs as a separatist regime would have.<sup>40</sup> What the DPA and Pishivari stood firm on and chose to emphasize over class issues and social reforms was the right to use their own language and communal solidarity generally against the encroachments of Tehran.<sup>41</sup>

Though one or the other might be emphasized depending on the situation, the time or the organization in question, the admixture of class and ethnic issues is clear not only in the DPA program, but in its social base, accomplishments and problems. Membership in the DPA reached 75,000, according to the newspaper *Azarbaijan* in January 1946, of which 56,000 were peasants, 6,000 intellectuals, 3,000 artisans and shopkeepers, 2,000 merchants, 500 landowners and 100 ulama.

<sup>38</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 217, 398-401; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 108; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 319.

<sup>39</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 400-401; Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran*, 85, 91.

<sup>40</sup> The quote is from Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 408. See also Katouzian's perceptive distinction between autonomy and separatism (though he also provides evidence of threats by Pishivari to separate from Iran): *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 150, 151, 161 note 9. Less convincing on the separatist claim are Nissman, *The Soviet Union and Iranian Azerbaijan*, 33, and Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 81.

<sup>41</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 359, 403, 407.

Peasants adhered in great numbers, though as we shall see, grievances later developed with the DPA. Many large landlords did flee Azarbaijan, but others participated in the government. Labor was enthusiastic, with 50,000 members of the C.C.F.T.U. supporting the DPA. Women were permitted to vote for the first time in Iranian history.<sup>42</sup> We thus see a variant on the populist alliance, with the unique addition of a sizable peasant contingent and the influential presence of a few landlords, in addition to the predictable urban classes of workers, intellectuals, artisans, merchants and a few ulama. This broader alliance is in part attributable to the ethnic solidarity emphasized by the DPA to appeal to landlords and large merchants as well as peasants and workers, and to unite Muslims and Christians, Kurds, Azaris and Armenians against the exploitative central government in Tehran.

In the area of social and economic reforms the DPA regime showed its sensitivity to class grievances and made great attempts to shore up its populist social base. On the economic front it

... decreed a comprehensive labor law; tried to stabilize prices by opening government food stores; and shifted the tax burden from food and other necessities to business profits, landed wealth, professional incomes, and luxury goods. It also changed the face of Tabriz by asphaltting the main roads; opening clinics and literacy classes; founding a university, a radio station, and a publishing house; and renaming streets after Sattar Khan, Baqer Khan, and other heroes of the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>43</sup>

Other measures included nationalization of banks, building of orphanages, houses for the aged, and hospitals, and in the cultural arena, creation of a theater and publishing houses for works in Azari, including poetry and folklore collections. Cottam judges that the DPA accomplished more reforms in one year in Tabriz than Reza Shah had in twenty.<sup>44</sup>

The most historically significant of the reforms was in agriculture, where the DPA tried to enact Iran's first land reform. This was effected by distributing to peasants lands belonging to the state or landlords who opposed the regime or had fled Azerbaijan. In this way an estimated 257,066 hectares were given to 209,096 peasants. On other lands still in landlord hands, the share of the crop

<sup>42</sup> On the social bases of the movement, see Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 108, 109; McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 375; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 396, 399-400; Good, "Social Hierarchy in Provincial Iran," 157; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 126-27; and Sepehr Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era. Roots of the Iranian Revolution* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1982), 158 note 11.

<sup>43</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 408-9.

<sup>44</sup> Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 126-27. See also Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 20; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 321; and Nissman, *The Soviet Union and Iranian Azerbaijan*, 41.

for the peasants was raised (estimates vary, from 30 to as high as 85 percent for the peasant). Land distribution efforts were somewhat attenuated by the continued landlord presence in the DPA regime and by the poor harvest of 1946, but the reforms of the government won it much popular support: "The British consul in Tabriz reported that the land reform gained many friends, the work projects alleviated unemployment, the administrative reforms brought more efficiency, and the changes, on the whole, found considerable popular support."<sup>45</sup>

Despite these accomplishments, the Autonomous Government of Azarbaijan found itself increasingly beset by problems in the second half of 1946. External relations with both enemies and ostensible allies grew increasingly strained. Most obviously there were difficulties with the central government in Tehran, despite the June accord which provided a temporary lull. As the next section will show, Azarbaijan's fate was largely tied to the balance of forces in Iran as a whole, and this changed drastically in the autumn. Support from the Soviet Union was also far weaker than is imagined by those who have called the DPA regime "a Russian puppet." The withdrawal of Soviet troops in May left the province on its own militarily, and Soviet promises of heavy artillery and tanks were never kept, leaving Tehran with a huge military advantage over Tabriz.<sup>46</sup> Relations with the Tudeh Party were also less than ones of complete encouragement and support. In essence, Tudeh policy was to keep a fair distance from the DPA but not to openly criticize it, thereby undermining effective solidarity with the movement.<sup>47</sup> Finally, relations with the Kurdish Republic were also based on an uneasy half-cooperation, as Azarbaijan's formal alliance with Kurdistan won only suspicion in Tehran, while the Kurds felt considerable resentment at their subordinate status vis-a-vis Tabriz and over territorial disputes in mixed Kurdish-Azari areas such as Urumiyah, as well as general doubts on the part of Kurdish tribal khans about the more radical social reformers in Azarbaijan.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 409. Data on the land reform is from *ibid.*, 408; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 321; Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 312; and Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 127.

<sup>46</sup> For the "puppet" thesis, see Rossow, "The Battle of Azerbaijan," 18ff. For measured assessments of the actual Soviet role, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 218, 411; McFarland, "A Peripheral View," 343; and McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 433.

<sup>47</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 402-11.

<sup>48</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 151-52; Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 60, 76, 82-83,

Serious internal contradictions were experienced as well. Economic problems cut into popular support for the DPA. These included capital flight as land reform frightened urban merchants and industrialists, who feared they might be next to be expropriated. Workers suffered layoffs, cuts in benefits and increased industrial discipline as the regime sought to increase factory productivity and profits. The urban population in general was alienated by new taxes and compulsory military service. Peasants saw new exactions (as did landlords) on top of a bad harvest, plus the imposition of price controls. Pro-Soviet rhetoric, compounded by a harsh internal security force which some commentators consider engaged in a "reign of terror," further disenchanted the population, which retained strong Islamic sensibilities. Tribal revolts by Afshars, Shahsavans and Zulfaqars were encouraged by Tehran and disturbed the social order while wearing down the local militia.<sup>49</sup> Thus, while regional, linguistic and ethnic aims united the populist alliance, social reforms first split off landlords and capitalists, and then the DPA's economic problems divided the mass base of the movement. The situation was thus a highly fragile one by autumn of 1946.

**Kurdistan.** The roots of Kurdish nationalism lay in a centuries-old sense of a distinct history, coupled with Sunni rather than Shi'i religious beliefs. More recently, there had been several tribal revolts and an urban nationalist movement between 1919 and 1930. In the 1930s power shifted to settled urban Kurds as Reza Shah weakened the tribal chiefs, although social organization remained predominantly tribal, whether nomadic or settled agricultural at the economic base (i.e., there were sedentary tribal peasants). During World War 2 much of Kurdistan including the key city of Mahabad (with a population of 16,000, formerly called Sauj Bulagh) lay just south of the Soviet zone of occupation and north of the British zone, nominally closer to the Soviet forces. The major tribes (see Map 7.4) re-armed, leading chiefs and urban dignitaries visited Baku to discuss national aspirations with the Soviet authorities, and in May 1943 a raid on the Iranian police station at Mahabad drove the Iranian gendarmerie out of the town for the duration of the war. Mahabad, and much of

94, 106; Archie Roosevelt, Jr., "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," pp. 247-269 in the *Middle East Journal*, volume 1, number 3 (July 1947), 259.

<sup>49</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 151-53; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 411-12; Rossow, "The Battle of Azerbaijan," 19; Tapper, "Black Sheep, White Sheep and Red Heads," 75; Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 81.

the surrounding countryside, was thus de facto independent by this point.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile a small group of middle class men met at Mahabad in September 1942 to organize a Kurdish political party called the Komala (Komala-i Zhian-i Kurdistan, "Committee of the Life (or Resurrection) of Kurdistan"). By 1945 the Komala had attracted most of the tribal chiefs and urban notables to its banner, and its leader by general consensus was Qazi Muhammad, a respected religious judge of Mahabad with a forceful personality. A delegation travelled to Baku in September 1945 to reiterate desires for a separate Kurdish state and request Soviet financial and military assistance. Later in the autumn some 10,000 Barzani Kurds from Iraq under Mulla Mustafa Barzani fled into Iran and pledged their support to the cause. The Komala changed its name to the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (DPK) on Soviet advice. Its program called for self-government of the Kurdish people in local affairs, use of Kurdish as the official language and for education, a provincial council, Kurdish government officials only, retention of tax revenues for local use, fraternity with the people of Azarbaijan, and improvement of the moral standards, health and economic conditions of the Kurdish people. There followed the events of December 1945 and January 1946 culminating in Qazi Muhammad's declaration of an autonomous Kurdish *republic*, thereby going beyond both the DPK's earlier program and the government in Azarbaijan.<sup>51</sup>

The tiny Kurdish Republic of Mahabad measured some 120 by 60 miles (this was much less than all of Iranian Kurdistan—compare Maps 7.2, 7.3 and 7.5). It reposed on a mixed urban and tribal social base. The state consisted of urban merchants, officials and landlords from Mahabad in the cabinet, and a mostly tribal army of 12,750 men from 28 different groups, skilled in ambush and mountain seige warfare but also relying on outmoded cavalry charges. The movement was genuinely popular among a broad section of the urban population in Mahabad, where both women's and youth sections of the DPK were formed. Tribal support was wide but perhaps not too deep—many chiefs affiliated with the DPK, some participated in the army, others were content to enjoy autonomy in

<sup>50</sup> Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 66-67, 70-71; Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 14-37; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 175; Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," 257.

<sup>51</sup> Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 29-63.

their localities with only loose ties to Mahabad. There was a marked drop in tribal support as the situation became more precarious later in 1946, as we shall see, and there was naturally some tension between urban and tribal elements and among the tribal chiefs themselves.<sup>52</sup> We may discern here yet another variation on the multi-class populist alliance, notable for the participation of tribal chiefs and their followers alongside urban members of most classes. This was of course made possible by the movement's emotional appeal to *all* Kurds, but as we shall see it set distinct limits on how radical the changes attempted could be.

On the positive side, contemporary reports noted the more open political atmosphere than in the past under Iranian control. People could carry arms, there was no secret police, and indeed no real internal opposition to the republic to be feared. Culturally, publications in Kurdish became available (on a printing press sent from the Soviet Union); these included textbooks for the primary grades, a newspaper and a monthly journal both called *Kurdistan*, two literary magazines, and *Nishteman*, the organ of the DPK. Radio broadcasts from Ankara and London were freely listened to (this reportedly carried the death penalty in DPA-run Tabriz). Thus the regime was widely popular, "at least among the citizens of Mahabad, who enjoyed their respite from the exactions and repression they considered to be characteristic of the central Iranian government."<sup>53</sup>

Economically, taxes were coming in, both from tribal chiefs who wanted to be associated with the regime, and as a result of levies on some of the wealthier families of Mahabad, who were less enthusiastic. Merchants thrived on goods smuggled in more easily from Iraq for sale in Mahabad, or further afield in Tabriz and Tehran. The 1945 harvest was a good one, and the entire tobacco crop was sold to the Soviet Union for \$800,000 in Iranian currency and Soviet goods (even though the Iranian government had already paid ten percent on it).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 68, 70-71, 78, 87, 91-92; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 72-73; Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," 248, 255-56, 257 note 4.

<sup>53</sup> Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," 264-65. See also *ibid.*, 262, 262 note 10; and Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 65, 81, 101.

<sup>54</sup> Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 87-88, 101.

As in the case of Azarbaijan however, there were both internal and external limits and problems faced by the Kurdish Republic. Internally, there was no move toward land distribution and no hint of a socialist dimension to the DPK program as there were in Azarbaijan. Roosevelt notes that "The villages were run by their old landlords and tribal leaders with the aid of a gendarmerie locally recruited and dressed in Kurdish costume, but commanded by officers from Mahabad with Soviet uniforms"—a subtle improvement at best from the point of view of the Kurdish peasant. Tribal support gradually dropped off too, as khans were generally wary of the urban leadership and suspicious of the possibility of a leftward turn as in neighboring Azarbaijan. Rivalries existed between the Barzanis of Iraq, who remained supporters of the DPK, and Iranian tribal groups, partly due to the pressures on the food supply. By autumn 1946 key tribes were promising their loyalty to the central government's plan to retake Azarbaijan, concerned for their own future under Iranian control. The main armed defenders of the republic thus became increasingly unreliable.<sup>55</sup>

Mirroring this lack of internal unity, external relations were not particularly favorable either. Kurdistan was locked into a tense conflict with the central government, and in May and June 1946 small-scale skirmishes were frequent in the border zones. When Qazi Muhammad went to Tehran in August to negotiate with Qavam, the latter slyly offered to make Kurdistan a province with Qazi as probable governor, knowing full well that Qazi could not accept this since the Soviets and Azarbaijan would oppose it. The Soviet position in Kurdistan was one of general encouragement but limited material or diplomatic aid. The two sides collaborated more out of mutual need versus the Iranian state than from any genuine affinity, as the movement was primarily nationalist and conservative in thrust. There was a minimal Soviet presence in Kurdistan compared with Azarbaijan, and while some 6,200 light weapons were supplied, no tanks or artillery were ever sent. The Soviets thus had some influence because they could withdraw support, but little positive control over the direction taken by the DPK. As already noted, relations with the DPA regime in Tabriz were formally friendly but in reality somewhat strained by territorial disputes and the larger issue of Kurdish

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 64, 103, 109-11; Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," 255, 256, 261 (for quote), 265.

autonomy from Azarbaijan, which considered most of Kurdistan part of its jurisdiction. Overtures to the United States and the British led to no alternative support as the British were concerned not to arouse Arab resentment in Iraq and the United States stood behind Tehran in seeing the movement as a Soviet-sponsored threat to the shah.<sup>56</sup>

The contradictions faced by the Kurdish Republic thus sharpened in the course of 1946. The stresses of a Soviet-encouraged regional movement had been symbolically embodied in the dress of Qazi Muhammad when he had declared the republic in January, attired in "a Soviet-style uniform and the white turban of a religious dignitary."<sup>57</sup> Nine months later Qazi had to reckon with enmities to the north with Azarbaijan, limited tribal support internally and little Soviet aid externally, when the time came to face the Iranian army.

## II.C. Dénouement

The fate of the rebellions in Kurdistan and Azarbaijan was inextricably bound up with the larger context of the balance of social forces in Iran as a whole (which in turn included the even larger international dimension). In the spring and summer of 1946 this context was quite favorable for progressive social movements. On May 1, 1946 60,000 Tudeh supporters marched in Tehran. The C.C.F.T.U. was at the peak of its power, claiming 335,000 unionized workers. An equal number of peasants may have been organized in their own unions, especially concentrated throughout the north, but also forcing landlords to relinquish a greater share of the crop in such southern and central locations as Isfahan, Yazd and Kirman.<sup>58</sup>

Between May and July one of the largest (if not the largest) industrial strikes in Middle Eastern history till then was waged and won by the oil workers. On May Day 1946, 80,000 workers paraded at Abadan, the site of the oil refinery:

<sup>56</sup> Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 64-66, 74, 90, 95-99, 102-4, 106, 109; Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," 250, 259.

<sup>57</sup> Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 300, 302, 303; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Navin-i Iran*, 114-15.

A woman orator described oil as the "jewel" of Iran, and, accusing the British of spending more on dog food than on workers' wages, demanded nationalization of the A.I.O.C. This was probably the first time that the call for oil nationalization had been heard in the streets of Abadan.<sup>59</sup>

On May 10 2,500 workers struck at Agha Jari oilfield for higher wages. The company cut off water to the area but gave in three weeks later when the C.C.F.T.U. threatened a general strike in Abadan. By mid-June the Tudeh was effectively governing much of the province, setting food prices, controlling communications and transport, patrolling the streets and guarding the oil installations. On July 10 the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company struck back with wage cuts and the provincial government declared martial law. This prompted a four-day general strike of up to 100,000 workers both inside and outside the oil industry, and despite armed clashes between the strikers and British-incited Arab tribesmen, the outcome was a cancellation of the wage cuts and a raise in the minimum wage.<sup>60</sup>

These events pushed the Qavam government to the left in the summer of 1946. A progressive labor law was enacted and landlords were directed to give 15 percent of the harvest back to peasants, although neither measure was seriously enforced. Restrictions on the Tudeh were relaxed and there was a crackdown on conservative newspapers and organizations instead. On August 1 Qavam took the unprecedented step of naming three Tudeh members to his cabinet as ministers of commerce, health and education, while liberals or progressives also received the ministries of justice (Allahyar Saleh) and labor (Muzaffar Firuz). The Tudeh was at the apogee of its power and popularity, de facto administrators of such industrial cities as Abadan, Ahwaz, Isfahan, Sari, Rasht and Anzali. The *New York Times* estimated the Tudeh would take 40 percent of the vote in a fair election, a huge plurality given the number of political parties. In September 100,000 supporters celebrated the fifth anniversary of the party.<sup>61</sup>

This was the high watermark of the national social movement however. The beginning of the end occurred in late September with a revolt of southern tribes led by the Qashqa'i under their chief

<sup>59</sup> Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 225, citing a British consular report.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-29; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 303; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 123; Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 82.

<sup>61</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 121; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 118019; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 229, 300 (citing the *New York Times* of June 15, 1946), 301, 304; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 155; Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran*, 140-41.

Nasir Khan. At first motivated by military repression of small-scale Bakhtiari disturbances at Isfahan, by September 23 a coalition of Qashqa'i, Bakhtiari, Khamseh, Arabs and Boir Ahmadis had captured Bushire, Kirman and other small cities. Their major demands were for southern autonomy equal to that of Kurdistan and Azarbaijan, local development, removal of certain oppressive army officers and, most significantly, dismissal of the Tudeh cabinet ministers on the grounds that "communism, atheism and anarchism endangered democracy, Iran, and Islam." This provided an opening for conservative social forces in Tehran: chief of staff Razmara refused to attack the Qashqa'i unless he could also go into Kurdistan and Azarbaijan.<sup>62</sup>

Prime minister Qavam now came under considerable pressure from another source to address these crises. The shah, Razmara and leading conservative politicians plotted a coup to oust him. They approached American ambassador George Allen on October 14, who at first refused to either support or dissuade them, but then promised that the United States would keep the gendarmerie from interfering in Qavam's removal. On October 16-17, Qavam acted first by dismissing the Tudeh governors of Tehran, Isfahan and Kirmanshah and then the Tudeh ministers. He next announced an agreement with the southern tribal rebels granting most of their demands, and resigned. On October 19 he was re-appointed, and his new cabinet had no Tudeh or pro-Soviet members, with Firuz being sent off as ambassador to Moscow. In the next several weeks he completed his rightward turn, arresting Tudeh members and trade unionists, banning leftwing publications, declaring martial law in key provinces and appointing anti-communist governors. He also announced that the elections for the next majlis would begin in December and indicated his intention to send troops into Azarbaijan and Kurdistan to "supervise" them.<sup>63</sup>

Changing circumstances in the international balance of forces contributed to Qavam's political *volte-face*. Though the Truman doctrine of containing the Soviet Union was first announced only in a March 1947 speech before Congress, the United States made a quieter decision to take a more

<sup>62</sup> The quote is from Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 235. See also McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 461-63; Barker, "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i," 144; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 126.

<sup>63</sup> McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 465-68; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 237-38; Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 217.

activist role in Iran during the course of 1946 "not only by words but by appropriate acts." This involved something of a shift from traditional non-interventionism (at least in the Middle East) and avowed support for democratic forces to a decision impelled by anti-communism as a guiding principle to support the shah and Iran's armed forces in their efforts to retake the autonomous provinces. Bolstered by promises of American economic and military aid, the shah was able to force Qavam's rightward tilt, thereby laying the groundwork for the invasions of Azarbaijan and Kurdistan.<sup>64</sup> The Soviet Union did little to oppose these moves, acquiescing in the decision to send Iranian troops to Tabriz to supervise the elections for the majlis which it hoped would ratify its northern oil concession. It had little leverage with Iran anymore and could not react quickly enough to Qavam's moves with any real effectiveness. It could only hope that a minimal force would enter Tabriz for the elections, and then leave.<sup>65</sup>

Such was not the case. Both the Autonomous Government of Azarbaijan and the Kurdish Republic came to a quick end when Iranian troops approached in December 1946. The DPA in Tabriz was split on whether to surrender or resist, but after two days of uncertainty, quietly gave up. There were violent reprisals against DPA members both before and after the Iranian army arrived, in which anywhere from 500 people (according to British and American sources) up to 14-15,000 (according to Soviet sources) perished. Many others either fled to the Soviet Union or were arrested. Of the latter, the leftwing press reported 860 people hung or shot by July 1947.<sup>66</sup> After Tabriz collapsed, Qazi Muhammad in Kurdistan ruled out flight or resistance, and submitted to the Iranian forces before they reached Mahabad. While most of the tribes other than the Barzanis cooperated with the army, the people of Mahabad showed no enthusiasm for the arrival of Iranian troops, as had been the case in Tabriz. After a military trial, Qazi, two of his relatives and five Kurdish officers were hanged; 28 other members of the Kurdish Republic were given prison terms. Mulla Mustafa

<sup>64</sup> McFarland, "A Peripheral View," 348-49; McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 465-74, 484; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 273-75.

<sup>65</sup> Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 111; Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 82.

<sup>66</sup> Rossow, "The Battle of Azerbaijan," 29-31; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 239-40, 305; McFarland, "The Crises in Iran," 477-78, 180-81; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 27, citing *Mardom* (The People, a Tudeh newspaper), July 5, 1947.

Barzani and his tribesmen eventually made a daring move through Iraq and Iran to the Soviet Union in June 1947, eluding the Iranian army.<sup>67</sup>

#### II.D. Conclusions, Aftermath

The social movements in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan in 1945-46 departed in some significant respects from both earlier and later struggles in Iran, and presented a somewhat unusual mix of the factors involved. They were, first of all, not national in scope, but regional, and thus ethnic as well as class issues were raised. Like all primarily local movements from those of the Safavid period to the short-lived governments in Gilan, Khurasan and Azarbaijan after World War 1, they were effectively isolated and eventually crushed by the central state. Halliday's judgement that they posed the most serious twentieth-century threat to the government<sup>68</sup> is plausible only because of yet another unusual factor—the two autonomous regions rose and fell with reliance on an outside power, the Soviet Union. Local grievances touched them off, but the Soviet occupation made them viable. Similarly, when a combination of international pressure, Iranian diplomatic skill, and wishful thinking or plain miscalculation on the Soviet side removed Soviet troops and limited Soviet aid to the two rebellious areas, they were quickly retaken by Iran.

This points to the limits of these regional variants of the populist alliance. Far more broadly based than the typically urban form of the populist alliance in the Constitutional Revolution, the movement in Azarbaijan involved both peasants and landlords, and in Kurdistan tribal chiefs, peasants and tribespeople, as well as urban elements. The mobilization of the populace was made possible by appeals to ethnic solidarity to face the hostile central government, but ultimately foundered due to internal conflicts of interest between peasants, landlords and the DPA in Azarbaijan, and tribal and urban interests in Kurdistan. As we have seen, economic contradictions undermined cross-class ethnic solidarity, especially in Azarbaijan, and the lack of genuine social reforms probably reduced the DPK's mass base in Kurdistan. United by ethnicity, fragmented by class,

<sup>67</sup> Eagleton, *The Kurdish Republic*, 11-31; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 73-74.

<sup>68</sup> Halliday, *Dictatorship and Development*, 449.

paradoxically tied to the shifting policies of an external power to oppose the internal domination of the Iranian state, and regionally strong but nationally weak, the movements of 1945-46 were brief flourishings of oppressed but proud minorities within Iran.

**Aftermath.** The defeat of the Kurdish and Azarbaijani movements marked a general check-mate for the left in Iran and for the Soviet Union as an external actor. Throughout 1947 the trade union movement suffered mass arrests, as did the peasant organizations and Tudeh Party. The fifteenth majlis (1947-49) consisted largely of landlords and large merchants, and was divided into three major factions, all conservative—Qavam's Democrat Party (which soon disintegrated), a royalist bloc and a pro-British grouping. The Soviets' oil concession was overwhelmingly rejected by the majlis in October 1947 by a vote of 102 to 2, signalling the complete defeat of postwar Soviet policy in Iran. The bill refusing the concession also directed the Iranian government to enter negotiations and take action to reestablish the rights of Iran to all its resources, especially the southern oil concession with the British.<sup>69</sup> The end of one wave of regional social movements thus signalled faintly the beginning of another, nationwide struggle to come.

### III. The Oil Nationalization Movement, 1951-53

Between 1951 and 1953 the second mass social movement to take place in the twentieth century swept Iran. Like its predecessor the Constitutional Revolution, the oil nationalization struggle led by Muhammad Mussadiq confronted both the monarchy and foreign powers in Iran, mobilized a vast urban multi-class populist alliance, and after initial successes, suffered internal fragmentation and external intervention, to end in failure. Judgments on the thrust of this movement have yielded interpretations ranging from "a liberal constitutional reformist movement" to "a revolutionary episode."<sup>70</sup> The point of view adopted here enables us to see it as a revolutionary attempt to break Iran's external dependence on the West, and in particular, on Great Britain, and internally, a far-

<sup>69</sup> Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 127-30; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 242-48, 305-15; Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran*, 162; Rossow, "The Battle of Azerbaijan," 31-32; "Iranian Law Rejecting the Draft Oil Agreement with the USSR" (October 22, 1947), p. 280 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II.

<sup>70</sup> For the former, see Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 148, and for the latter, Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 164.

reaching reform-oriented attempt to make Iran a functioning democratic constitutional monarchy. The keys to this interpretation lie in the nature of the oil nationalization issue and the struggle to construct a solid populist alliance capable of confronting Britain and the shah.

### III.A. The Nationalization of Iranian Oil

Though there was a return to state repression after December 1946, the situation was far from one of order and tranquility, either economically or politically. Inflation resumed in the late 1940s. In 1949 an assassination attempt on the shah failed, but provided a pretext for a ban on the Tudeh and renewed crackdowns on the left and labor movements. It also allowed the shah to gain new constitutional powers to dissolve the majlis, and set up a senate with one-half of its members royally appointed. The 1949-50 elections were stormy, with charges of fraud, the assassination of prime minister Hazhir, and eventually the election of a small eight-member nationalist group led by Mussadiq in an otherwise fairly conservative body. Unemployment surged, as did business bankruptcies, in 1950. In the summer of that year, General 'Ali Razmara became the first non-civilian prime minister since Reza Shah. He soon alienated conservatives by relaxing controls on the Tudeh, and progressives by not pressing for oil nationalization. In early March of 1951 Razmara was assassinated by an assailant variously presumed to have been a religious extremist or a communist.<sup>71</sup>

Concurrently, since 1949, the oil issue had been assuming a greater profile in national politics. Recognition was growing of the fundamental injustice of fixed royalties while prices and profits increased. From 1933 to 1949 the AIOC had a net income of 895 million pounds sterling. Of this amount, 500 million pounds were profits retained for capital investment, 175 million pounds were paid in taxes to the British government, 115 million pounds went as dividends to non-Iranian (mainly British) shareholders, and only 105 million pounds were paid in all to the Iranian government, some 11.9 percent of net income, or 14.6 percent of net profits.<sup>72</sup> Thus 88 percent of AIOC's income was

<sup>71</sup> For the events of these years, see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 145, 158-60; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 246-52, 261-66, 305-18; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 22-26, 42-43, 158 notes 2 and 3; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 260-61; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 138-39.

<sup>72</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 183 table 9.2. For other data on the apportionment of profits, royalties and taxes, see *ibid.*, 182 table 9.1; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 157-58 tables 3-4; Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran*, 178; Moghadam, "Iran's Foreign Trade Policy," 76 note 2; Keddie, *Roots of Revu-*

paid to or retained by the English. Other aggregate figures for the whole existence of the AIOC from 1908 to 1950 put its total profits as three to five billion dollars and Iran's share of these at ten to twenty percent.<sup>73</sup> In 1947, with Iran's royalties at seven million pounds, the AIOC had customs exemptions on imports into Iran worth six million pounds, and exempting oil from export taxes cost Iran 20 million pounds.<sup>74</sup> AIOC's operations in Iran covered 259,000 square kilometers of concession territory, and it possessed 300 oil derricks, 2,800 kilometers of pipe line, over 100 shops, 100,000 vehicles, several airports and radio stations, and the world's largest oil refinery, at Abadan, complete with its own security force.<sup>75</sup>

After World War 2 the importance of Middle Eastern oil became increasingly apparent. Having hitherto produced only 3.8 percent of the world's petroleum, the Middle East was estimated in 1945 to contain 42.1 percent of proven oil reserves, and by 1954 this had jumped to 64 percent. In 1945 Iran produced more oil than all Arab countries combined, and ca. 1950-51 was accounting for 30 million of the world's 637 million tons produced, but was receiving only 18 cents a barrel [!], compared with 35 cents in Bahrein, 56 cents in Saudi Arabia and 60 cents in Iraq. In the late 1940s U.S. oil companies agreed to 50-50 profit-sharing arrangements with Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. When Iran demanded revisions of its royalties, the AIOC proposed only a "Supplemental Agreement" that would have given Iran a royalty of six rather than four shillings per ton in 1949. Mussadiq led a filibuster against this in July 1949 and it was never ratified by the majlis.<sup>76</sup>

lution, 133; and L. P. Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil. A Study in Power Politics* (London: Laurence and Wishart, Ltd., 1955), 84. Even an AIOC official described the company's relationship to Iran as one of "crudest exploitation" (presumably without intending the pun!): S. H. Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East: Its Discovery and Development* (1968), 157, quoted by Saikal, *The Rise and Fall*, 38.

<sup>73</sup> For the higher figures and lower profits see "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 385, and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 145; for the lower figures and higher profits, William A. Dorman and Mansour Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran. Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 39.

<sup>74</sup> Elwell-Sutton, *Persian Oil*, 84.

<sup>75</sup> Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 145.

<sup>76</sup> "Supplemental Agreement: Iran and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company" (July 17, 1949), pp. 305-308 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy II*, and "Agreement (Jiddah) for Equal Sharing of the Profits: The Sa'udi Arab Government and Aramco" (December 30, 1950), pp. 314-322 in *ibid*; also 249 in *ibid*; Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War*, 180 note 125, 183 note 129; Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, 8-9; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 146. Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 101-2, notes that the AIOC issued an "educational work" insultingly titled *Child's Guide to the Agreement*, and gave copies to the shah and prime minister.

Events moved quickly in 1951 to prove Churchill's 1914 prognosis wrong (see epigraph to this chapter). In January mass meetings were held by both Mussadiq's National Front and in mosques demanding nationalization of oil. The majlis oil committee recommended nationalization on March 8 (the day after Razmara's assassination); the majlis endorsed the resolution on March 15 and the senate on March 20. In April oil workers struck for two weeks to protest wage cuts and demand nationalization. On April 28 Mussadiq became prime minister by a vote of 79 to 12; on April 30 both chambers of the assembly passed the oil nationalization bill; and on May 1 the shah promulgated the law formally dispossessing the AIOC and authorizing creation of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).<sup>77</sup> These events touched off a British economic blockade and signalled the start of the two-year oil nationalization struggle, a tumultuous period in the history of Iranian social change.

### III.B. Mussadiq, the National Front and the New Populist Alliance

This section will analyze the new form taken by Iran's populist alliance in the 1951-53 period, by a look at the parties and underlying social forces which participated in the oil nationalization movement, both inside and outside the National Front. The heterogeneity of classes and ideological outlooks within the alliance will point toward the splits that eventually developed, which, along with the conservative and royalist opposition, will be treated in later sections of this chapter. For now we want to identify the diverse forces which made the movement strong.

The National Front had its origins in a dual protest by various critics of government manipulation of the 1949 elections and the proposed supplementary oil agreement. The group eventually elected eight representatives from Tehran, including Mussadiq, Husain Makki, Allahyar Saleh, Abulhassan Hairizadeh and others. In the next two years, a larger group of parties representing various middle and lower classes joined the National Front, while other progressive elements, including the Tudeh and part of the ulama, generally supported its main issue—the nationalization of oil. The

<sup>77</sup> Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 22-23; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 322-23; Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 218-19. The dramatic nature of this sequence of events is such that Abrahamian advances the interesting argument that internal unrest focused the shah, the basically conservative majlis, and even the National Front on the oil nationalization issue to deflect attention from the class conflict: *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 263-66.

main constituent parties in the National Front included: 1) the Iran Party, a left-of-center non-communist grouping of intellectuals, technocrats, professionals and students; 2) the Toilers Party, divided into a group of intellectuals and workers under Khalil Maliki which had left the Tudeh and a group of artisans, traders and more centrist intellectuals around Dr. Muzaffar Baqa'i of Kirman; 3) the bazaar-rooted Mujahidin-i Islam of traders, guild leaders, religious students and ulania led by the clerics Shams al-Din Qunatabadi and Ayatullah Kashani (of whom more will be said later); and 4) the small Pan-Iran Party of Dariush Furuhar, appealing with a right-wing nationalism to secondary students and marginal classes, including some luti.<sup>78</sup>

The acknowledged leader of the National Front coalition was the extremely popular prime minister Muhammad Mussadiq. Mussadiq's main political platform centered around three somewhat related issues—the nationalization of Iran's resources, parliamentary democracy and internal reforms to ensure economic improvement. Mussadiq's populist appeal shows through in an October 1951 speech in which he said: "Wherever the people are, the *majless* is in the same place."<sup>79</sup> Indeed, Katouzian insists on the rendering of National Front as "Democratic Front," pointing out that the term *milli* means democratic and popular, as well as national.<sup>80</sup> In this sense it was almost literally a populist alliance then. And even the cursory listing of organizations and their underlying social bases mentioned above shows how multi-class and ideologically heterogeneous the movement was, a loose coalition of different groups and outlooks held together by the popularity of the cause of nationalizing Iran's oil industry and the leadership provided by Mussadiq.

The movement also included organizations and classes outside those represented in the National Front itself. The Tudeh Party retained great popular support among progressive intellectuals and the working class. Although its membership was down (due to repression and the adoption of a more cell-like underground structure), it was capable of calling large demonstrations, and on at least one occasion (in July 1952) its crowds helped keep Mussadiq in power. Relations between the

<sup>78</sup> On these parties, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 253-58; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 147-49, 170; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 49-50; and Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 265-68.

<sup>79</sup> Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 130.

<sup>80</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 149, 171.

Tudeh and Mussadiq were generally not harmonious however. Mussadiq was tolerant of Tudeh activities, permitting much freedom to organize and publicize its views, but he was restrained in his dealings with the party politically. The Tudeh leadership, for its part, was split on how to deal with the oil nationalization movement; the more experienced members seeing Mussadiq as progressive and anti-British, but the newer cadres tended to set the overall policy in opposing him "as the puppet of the comprador bourgeoisie attached to American imperialism" and as a feudal landlord.<sup>81</sup> The two sides never worked effectively together throughout most of this period. To the extent that the Tudeh had more working-class support, especially in the trade union movement, this tended to mute somewhat the participation of a crucial force in the populist alliance.

Another important social group that forged a certain relationship with the movement was the ulama, and beyond them, the bazaar classes generally. The ulama in this period split into various groups: high-ranking ulama were for the most part inactive or neutral, as the leading mujtahid, Ayatullah Burujirdi, had in 1949 prohibited ulama from joining parties and instead urged them to attend primarily to rebuilding the religious institutions of Iran. Many younger, lower-ranking ulama enthusiastically supported the movement however, as did other high- and middle-rank ulama, including Ayatullah Zanjani, Sayyid Mahmud (later Ayatullah) Taliqani, Mirza Muhammad Taqi Khwansari, Ayatullah 'Ali Akbar Burqa'i (known as the "Red Ayatullah"), and others. As many as one-third of the majlis members were ulama, many in the Mujahidin-i Islam, a part of the National Front already mentioned. Other religious elements were not so supportive. The less eminent but very popular Ayatullah Kashani was in the early part of the struggle an active advocate for the movement, but later broke with Mussadiq at a crucial juncture. The Fada'ian-i Islam, a small, radical, fervently-Islamic group that carried out political assassinations (including Razmara's in 1951) gave some support to Kashani but was resolutely opposed to the National Front and Mussadiq, because of

<sup>81</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 321-23. On the Tudeh, Mussadiq and the working class, see *ibid.*, 318-24; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 54, 95; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 165-68; Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 220-22; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 236-37; and "Mosaddeq's Role in the Events of 1951-3 in Persia," pp. 302-306 in *Central Asian Review*, volume IX, number 3 (1961), based on A. K. Lavrent'yev, *Imperialisticheskaya Politika SSHA i Anglii v Irane* [Imperialist Politics of the U.S. and England in Iran] (Moscow, 1960).

the generally secular thrust of the movement. It came to support the shah in the final showdown of 1953, as did Kashani, not to mention a number of long-standing royalist ulama, such as Ayatullah Muhammad Bihbihani. The various trends within the ulama influenced the other elements of the bazaar social structure, which was on the whole a source of pro-Mussadiq forces among the artisans, small traders and merchants. The marginal class luti toughs, it may be added, participated on both sides of the movement (though more decisively for the royalists), and could be mobilized by the ulama and some elements in the Tudeh and National Front.<sup>82</sup>

Two final classes to take note of are the peasants and the tribes. Mussadiq found a somewhat unlikely ally in the Qashqa'i tribe, which had remained a locally powerful force since the 1946 rebellion and which remembered Mussadiq as a popular governor of Fars in the 1920s. Mussadiq was seen as a symbol of nationalism opposed to the British (and by extension to the British-backed Bakhtiari tribe, the Qashqa'is' regional rival), and as an alternative to the return of an oppressive monarchic dictatorship as in the 1930s. Other tribal groups were not very active in the movement on either side. Nor were the peasants on the whole; as in the Constitutional Revolution they were difficult to mobilize for reasons of geography, landlord domination, and the government's lack of interest in any substantial land reform project.<sup>83</sup>

We are now in a position to make a preliminary assessment of the class composition of the oil nationalization movement. Ivanov's generalization that the National Front was limited to "nationalistically inclined landowner-bourgeois politicians and representatives of the intelligentsia," that it was a "national bourgeois organization,"<sup>84</sup> will not do for characterizing the movement as a whole.

<sup>82</sup> This paragraph draws on Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 147, 171, 190; Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 62-69; Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 22; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 139; Floor, "The Guilds in Iran," 110; Abrahamian, "The Crowd in Iranian Politics," 204; Floor, "The Political Role of the Lutis," 92; and Algar's 1982 lectures at Berkeley on Islam in Iran. Interestingly, Ruhullah (later Ayatullah) Khomeini was for the most part politically inactive during the oil nationalization movement, quite probably, as Algar suggests, due to its secular ideological basis.

<sup>83</sup> On the Qashqa'i, see Rey, "Persia in Perspective-2," 85; Beck, "Economic Transformations Among Qashqa'i Nomads," 100; and Barker, "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i," 144-45. On the peasantry, Rey, "Persia in Perspective-2," 86; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 166; Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 223; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 169-70.

<sup>84</sup> M. S. Ivanov, *Ocherki Istorii Irana* [Outline of Iranian History] (Moscow, 1952), 44, quoted in "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 389; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 143. Cf. also Lavrent'yev's view that Mussadiq represented the "middle classes of the national bourgeoisie": *Imperialisticheskaya Politika*, cited in "Mussadeq's Role," 302.

Diba, Abrahamian and Katouzian rightly point to the participation of students, industrial workers, artisans, traders, merchants, ulama, urban women and the Qashqa'i—what Abrahamian refers to as “two divergent forces: the traditional middle class ... and the modern middle class.”<sup>85</sup> I would conceptualize these classes as a multi-class alliance of dominated and middle classes from the petty-commodity, capitalist and a section of the pastoral-nomadic modes of production. Both conceptions point to the *mixed* bases of this populist alliance, and the material and ideological strains that were forming within it. Abrahamian notes that in terms of political culture, of its two components, “one was conservative, religious, theocratic, and mercantile; the other was modernistic, secular, technocratic, and socialistic.”<sup>86</sup> There was also, in my view, a centrist, democratic and liberal outlook embodied in the person of Mussadiq. Only the broadest aims could hold this coalition together—opposition to British imperialism and to the claims of the monarchy and military on state and society. Both internal political economic developments and external forces put severe pressures on the populist alliance, phenomena we shall now investigate.

### III.C. The Political Economy of the Mussadiq Period

**Economic performance.** The drama of Iran's economy in the 1951-53 period centered around the question of oil. Mussadiq had nationalized oil for both economic and moral-political reasons. Economically, he felt, “With the oil revenues we could meet our entire budget and combat poverty, disease, and backwardness among our people.”<sup>87</sup> In the event that nationalization led to a short-term fall in production he felt that the new terms would still equal past receipts and leave Iran's oil in the ground for the benefit of coming generations. In fact, almost *all* of Iran's oil remained in the ground after April 1951 due to a British-organized international boycott and military blockade, which was widely accepted by the world's oil companies. This forced the elaboration of a new economic policy based on the concept of an “oil-less economy” based on doing without oil revenues (which it could

<sup>85</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 259-60; Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 96-97; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 165.

<sup>86</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 260.

<sup>87</sup> Mustafa Fatch, *Punjab Sal Naft-i Iran [Fifty Years of Iranian Oil]* (Tehran, 1956), 525, quoted in Paine, “Iranian Nationalism,” 39.

be argued were used unproductively by the state anyway in the past and had benefited only an elite of top bureaucrats, army officers, the court, and indirectly, landowners and merchants who paid little or no income tax due to it).

The keys to the success of an oil-less economy lay in readjusting foreign trade and expanding domestic production. Table 7.3 shows the result with respect to trade.

Table 7.3  
Iran's Foreign Trade, 1948-1954  
(values in millions of rials)

Year	Imports	Oil Exports	Non-Oil Exports	Balance (w/ oil)	Balance (w/o oil)
1948	5,480	17,140	1,867	13,527	-3,613
1949	9,320	15,389	1,785	7,855	-7,537
1950	7,109	22,184	3,563	18,638	-3,546
1951	7,405	6,843	4,391	3,828	-3,104
1952	5,206	12	5,832	637	+625
1953	5,756	263	8,426	2,933	+2,670
1954	8,024	2,008	10,288	4,272	+2,264
1955	10,896	9,405	8,034	6,543	-2,863

Source: Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 104-6 table 4, 114-15 table 6, with minor corrections.

In 1952, the only full year of the Mussadiq administration, Iran's oil exports were reduced to negligible levels, yet a positive balance of trade without oil was achieved for the first time, a result repeated in 1953. This was accomplished by cutting imports by 32 percent in 1952 and then another 45 percent in 1953. Non-oil exports such as carpets, Caspian fish and caviar, live sheep, rice, tobacco and cotton were increased to meet the reduced import demands. The favorable balance of trade moreover obtained despite a fall in the terms of trade from a level of 100 in 1948 to 90 in 1949 and 69 in 1952. The total surplus however was less than in the pre-1951 period when large oil exports made the picture more favorable. The effect of these new trade patterns on merchants was mixed: large import-export businessmen in the chamber of commerce were alienated, but traders in carpets, dried fruits and other products did well and the bazaar merchants remained pro-Mussadiq.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 148 table 5; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 184-85; Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 161, 168; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 137; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 83; Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 85.

In terms of overall production there was a slowing but not a decline in the growth of GNP. There is some debate on the main trends in industry, where the leading sector was textiles, followed by food-processing and other light consumer industries. Graham and others feel industrialization was impeded. Certainly, the import of capital goods was down, as was capital formation generally.<sup>89</sup> Keddie however argues that there was industrial expansion in the direction of increased import-substitution and self-sufficiency, due to the limits on imports. Thus sugar-refining, textiles, cement and mining increased their output. The construction industry in housing and commercial building continued to expand though there was less government building undertaken. Use of the railway and its receipts were up despite the cuts in new imports of track and rolling stock. So on balance it would seem that there was a reactivation of domestic industry compared with the immediate pre-1951 years. There was a business recession in 1952, but there had been many bankruptcies in 1950 as well, so the Mussadiq policies were not entirely to blame. Strike data shows a great increase in incidents, from 4-5 per year in the 1948-50 period to 42 in 1951, 55 in 1952 and 71 in the first eight months of 1953; this can be read as a sign of health both in terms of the political atmosphere and the bargaining position of labor. Finally, it is difficult to gauge developments in the artisanal sector which accounted for so much of Iran's small-scale production; one may hazard the guess that it too benefited from the drop in imported goods, and bazaar support for the government is another possible sign of improved conditions.<sup>90</sup>

Agriculture maintained or increased production levels as well. Data on wheat, rice, tobacco and horses show steady gains in total production, with cotton, sheep and cattle making spectacular increases. Data on productivity of cereals is somewhat mixed, but basically positive. Other indices show more agricultural credit available than in the past, but imports of tractors and machinery (not large in any case) declining. Thus in May 1953 the U.S. commercial attaché reported that agriculture

<sup>89</sup> On these trends, including GNP, see Korby, *Probleme der industriellen Entwicklung*, 3 figure; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 54 table 6, 59 figure 1, 107 table 2, 175 table 2; and Graham, *Iran*, 46.

<sup>90</sup> On these trends and data, see Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 128, 136; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 82; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 204 table 5, 205 table 6, 209 table 7, 227 table 4, 233 table 7, 235 table 8; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 138, 170-71; Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 137-38; and Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 221.

was doing well. In the absence of any land reform other than an unenforced decree in 1952 that landlords return a ten percent share back to the peasant, living standards remained poor and inadequate in the countryside. The first signs of a growing rural-to-urban migration underline this point. The tribes seem to have continued their post-1941 recovery, and the pro-Mussadiq Qashqa'i in particular "enjoyed unprecedented peace and prosperity."<sup>91</sup>

One sector which was hard hit by the oil crisis was the state itself. The lack of oil revenues was compounded by reduced customs receipts as trade fell, the difficulties of collecting income taxes, and the unpopularity of such new taxes as one on cigarettes and tobacco. Britain froze Iran's sterling funds, worth \$26 million. The government issued \$25 million worth of bonds in February 1952, called "Popular Debt"; the bazaar and lower classes bought them but the wealthy held back. Nevertheless the state deficit grew even larger than in the past, rising sixfold between 1951 and 1954, as the obligation to pay the oil labor force was taken on even as exports were cut. The state thus faced severely straitened circumstances.<sup>92</sup>

To assess the impact of these economic conditions on the urban population is rather difficult. Certainly, the food situation was better than during World War 2, since no rationing was required despite the dislocations and drop in the volume of foreign trade. All available information on the consumer price index shows a steady rise in the inflation rate from 1950 to 1954 of seven to 16 percent a year, in part attributable to domestic conditions and in part an indirect effect of the Korean War. Wage data is scanty and does not permit a direct comparison with inflation, but wages were generally low in industry, and strikes, as we saw, were numerous now that they were not repressed, so clearly most middle to lower class urban residents struggled to make ends meet. Moreover, Mussadiq tried to fight inflation in October 1952 by restricting wage increases. Sixty percent of the

<sup>91</sup> Barker, "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i," 144. This discussion of agriculture draws on Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 134-35 table 1, 142-42 table 3, 242 table 3; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 409; Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," pp. 261-286 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 19, number 3 (August 1987), 278; Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 16-17; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 138.

<sup>92</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 71 table 4; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 136; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 174; Diba, *Muhammad Mossadegh*, 139; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 83-84; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 168.

urban population lived in "slum conditions" in the late 1940s. Katouzian writes that "poverty, even begging in the streets, had increased, and the unemployment of school-leavers and university graduates was becoming a serious problem."<sup>93</sup> Tehran's unemployment was estimated at 100,000 people by *Ittila'at* in 1950; the number for all Iran was 500,000.<sup>94</sup>

The overall economic situation during the Mussadiq period then was neither "desperate" nor "thriving." There was a reduction in foreign trade which altered consumption patterns but also encouraged steps toward import-substitution and greater self-sufficiency. The standard of living in the cities and especially in the countryside was certainly not high, but it does not seem to have worsened appreciably nor were all the economic problems of the period unique in that most of them predated the Mussadiq administration. Nevertheless the state had more or less severe fiscal problems, and the urban population did suffer from inflation and a degree of unemployment. Thus, while some real achievements were registered, notably in proving that Iran could subsist without oil revenues, there was an underlying reality of widespread, if not deep, economic discontent.

**Political developments.** If the domestic economy was not completely in a shambles, political happenings were often on a crisis plane, and Iran's external relations were decidedly unfavorable during 1952-53. Mussadiq's general program internally aimed at greater democratization of society. The policies announced in the summer of 1952 called for amendment of the electoral laws, improvement of civil administration, organization of village councils, and press freedom. In most of these areas gains were made: some political prisoners were released, the Tudeh's front organizations operated more freely, numerous publications opposed to the government circulated. Mussadiq himself was personally incorruptible and lived a widely-admired austere lifestyle. Reforms of the judicial, electoral and educational bureaucracies were mandated, and their performance was generally impressive.<sup>95</sup> The overall limits to this program lay in the lack of economically-oriented reforms—

<sup>93</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 189. On the other hand, the number of educational institutions at all levels had increased: Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 38-39 table 5.

<sup>94</sup> Data in this paragraph is drawn from Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 162; Dadkhah, "The Inflationary Process," 389 table 1; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 46-47 table 3, 48-49 table 4; Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 83; Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 220; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Navin-i Iran*, 139 (citing *Ittila'at*), 168; "Agricultural and Industrial Activity," 561 table IV; and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 129.

<sup>95</sup> Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 128, 157-58, 168; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 187 note 17; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 28-29; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 272-73.

especially in agriculture, but also with respect to labor—and the fact that the democratic transformation of society was constrained by a larger struggle for control of the state, which led Mussadiq into political contradictions.

In the complex struggle over the nature of the state Mussadiq had to battle both long-standing conservative elements and the disparate forces within his own populist alliance, a most difficult balancing act to sustain. Basically he aimed to shift the locus of power away from the shah, senate and army to the majlis and the cabinet, including his own office of prime minister. The 1952 majlis elections were a revealing setback for the government. Mussadiq wanted them to be free (i.e. unmanipulated by his government), but this left the field open to control by the army, shah and conservative elite in the provinces. The National Front did well in the freer atmosphere of the major cities, winning all 12 seats for Tehran. Mussadiq was compelled however to stop the voting due to the coercive situation in the provinces as soon as a quorum of 79 deputies was elected. Of these 79, only 30 were members of or close to the National Front, while another bloc of 25-30 were fence-sitters who would vote with the prevailing side, and at least a dozen were solidly pro-shah.<sup>96</sup>

A serious political crisis arose in July 1952 when Mussadiq resigned over the issue of who would control the army (he or the shah). The shah's appointment of Qavam as prime minister provoked the National Front to call a general strike for July 21, on which day Tudeh-, religious- and nationalist-led crowds fought the police and army in the streets. Shouts of "Down with the Shah! We want a people's republic!" were heard, and at least 69 people were killed and 750 wounded, most of them workers and artisans. The shah finally ordered Qavam's resignation in order to restore order, and the majlis unanimously renominated Mussadiq as prime minister. The brief mobilization of Tudeh supporters for Mussadiq both showed the Tudeh's mass following as nearly equal to and critical for the success of the National Front's, and alienated conservative and religious groups within the oil nationalization movement, without firmly attaching the Tudeh to the alliance in their place.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 274-76; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 174-75; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 34, 37-38; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 269.

<sup>97</sup> On the July events see Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 46-64; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 176; Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 265-66; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 271-72.

Mussadiq used his return to power to press his struggle for control of the state, especially the army, more aggressively against the court. In August 1952 he was granted "emergency powers" by the majlis to implement legislation in connection with his reform program without majlis approval for six months. In January 1953 these special powers were extended for twelve more months. He then forced the dissolution of the royalist-dominated senate, promising elections in the near future with a term limited to two years. The court's budget was cut, the shah had to transfer the royal estates back to the government, and the critical battle for control of the army was begun. Senior officers were purged, some on charges of embezzlement, and nationalist officers were promoted. At the same time the defence budget was cut 15 percent. By the spring of 1953 Mussadiq was in nominal control of the military and police, but the retired officers and others still active were plotting against him in a situation where the balance of power was rather unclear.<sup>98</sup>

Mussadiq's assumption of plenary powers also alienated some members of the populist alliance however. Notable among these was the speaker of the majlis Ayatullah Kashani, whose motives for withdrawing from the National Front probably had less to do with Mussadiq's foreshortening of democratic rights (the majlis had after all granted him these powers) than with personal rivalry and perhaps alarm at the secular and reform-oriented thrust of the movement. Significantly, most of the remaining pro-National Front ulama in the majlis continued to back Mussadiq. Observers disagree as to how much popular sentiment followed Kashani out of the alliance: Katouzian feels Kashani's following faded to insignificance after he withdrew; others that his and subsequent splits did undermine Mussadiq's support in the bazaar up to a certain point among merchants, artisans and ulama. This trend was reinforced when Dr. Muzaffar Baqa'i and other leaders of the Toilers Party also withdrew support in January 1953, causing the party to split into Khalil Maliki's pro-National Front Third Force, and an oppositional group led by Baqa'i. Baqa'i too is considered by many to have been a jealous political opportunist interested mainly in succeeding Mussadiq. Perhaps more than the alienation of the major bazaar social forces, these splits took from the oil nationalization movement

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<sup>98</sup> Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 158-59; Zabih, *The Moassadegh Era*, 78; Ashraf, "Iran," 116; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 272-73.

some of its ability to mobilize street crowds at crucial moments. Tangible evidence of this came when the shah and conservatives tried to incite an anti-Mussadiq riot on February 28, 1953, during which Kashani apparently assembled a crowd of several thousand to support the shah. Pro-Mussadiq crowds led by the Third Force, and the prime minister's guards, saved the day. At the very least the defectors from the populist alliance indirectly aided the anti-Mussadiq coalition consisting of the court, retired and active army officers, conservative ulama such as Ayatullah Bihbihani, pro-British conservative landlords, large merchants and the majlis opposition.<sup>99</sup>

**External relations.** The stage for a coup was further set in 1953 by the evolution of Iran's foreign relations with the major outside powers—Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. Mussadiq's foreign policy was predicated on the concept of "negative equilibrium," in effect a neutral, non-aligned pursuit of national independence which would deny concessions and influence to all outside powers rather than balance them off against one another as had been the case since Qajar times. Thus he had argued as early as 1943 that granting a northern oil concession to the Soviet Union would be comparable to "the folly of a person with one arm who would endeavor to amputate the other to keep his physical balance."<sup>100</sup> Such straightforward rejection of all demands would have been difficult in the best of world-systemic conjunctures. In the context of the oil nationalization and the cold war it brought sharp conflict with Great Britain, growing involvement of the United States in Iran's affairs, and the inactive hostility of the Soviet Union—all of which contributed greatly to the coming coup.

The consequences of failure to resolve the oil dispute with the British were grave for Iran. Unsuccessful negotiations in 1951 and 1952 foundered on British unwillingness to accept the principle of nationalization (an irony considering the nationalizations carried out by the Labor government), as well as excessive concern with their own prestige (and beyond that, of course, with profits). The British began a production slowdown immediately in April 1951 and after being expelled from

<sup>99</sup> On the splits in the National Front and the February 28, 1953 events, see Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 139; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 171, 177; Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 265-66, 281 note 28; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 94, 97-99, 110; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 254-55 table 6, 274-78; and Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 151-55, 223, 278-79.

<sup>100</sup> 1953 majlis speech quoted by Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 89.

Abadan in the summer undertook a full naval blockade and international boycott to prevent Iran from exporting oil on its own. This cut exports from 241.4 million barrels in 1951 to 10.6 million in 1952. The AIOC meanwhile suffered no great economic inconvenience because it simply stepped up production in Iraq. There is evidence that Mussadiq personally wanted to settle the dispute in 1952, either with World Bank mediation or directly with Britain, but that he feared the unpopularity of this measure at home, and his advisers talked him out of it. Katouzian argues persuasively that this was a decisive turning point in the movement, for getting the best terms possible could have reversed the internal and external pressures building toward a coup and given the government breathing space and the revenues to carry out reforms. On the other hand, it is difficult to see how the issue could have been resolved in the eyes of the Iranian people short of nationalization and how the British would have accepted anything less than non-nationalization. Instead of a resolution, the advent of a conservative government in Britain by 1952 put active plans to carry out a coup in Iran on the agenda.<sup>101</sup>

In this the British were ultimately aided by the United States. If the 1946 crisis over Azarbaijan had been the turning point in American-Iranian relations, the 1951-53 period marked the point of no return, during which the United States eventually committed itself to bolster the shah on his throne and took over from Great Britain the role of hegemonic power in Iran. The United States at first looked like a possible source of support for Mussadiq in his struggle with the British, promising continued aid and delivery of a previously discussed \$25 million Export-Import Bank loan in May 1951. Averell Harriman tried unsuccessfully to mediate the oil crisis in the summer of 1951. In November 1951 Mussadiq asked Truman for a \$120 million loan; the new Eisenhower administration refused this in 1952 on the grounds that Iran "had access to plentiful revenues from its oil reserves."<sup>102</sup> In November 1952 Mussadiq and Kashani asked again for a \$100 million loan and that U.S. companies immediately start buying Iranian oil, a policy favored by the smaller independent American oil companies. Eisenhower however informed Mussadiq in June that "the

<sup>101</sup> On Great Britain and Iran, see Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 108, 118-21, 132-34, 200; Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 24; Saikal, *The Rise and Fall*, 41; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 205, 214; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 172-76, 181-82; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 74, 156, 168 note 10; and Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 263-64.

<sup>102</sup> Paine, "Iranian Nationalism," 24.

Government of the United States was not presently in a position to extend more aid to Iran or to purchase Iranian oil."<sup>103</sup> The only American aid that continued to flow to Iran in this period was in the form of advisers and equipment to the army and police. Mussadiq in fact halted this briefly because it was conditional on a commitment to Western defence, but the United States, eager to retain influence with the military, backed down and stated that Iran could follow a non-aligned policy.<sup>104</sup>

Meanwhile, since 1948, the newly established CIA had operated a propaganda and political action program codenamed BEDAMN in Iran, directed against Tudeh and Soviet influence. Two Iranians codenamed Nerren and Cilley were given one million dollars a year to get anti-communist articles, books and cartoons published, to distribute leaflets, start rumors and hire street gangs (especially from the SUMKA (Nazi) and Pan-Iran parties to fight with Tudeh crowds, to infiltrate *agents provocateurs* into Tudeh demonstrations, to pay ulama to attack the Tudeh in sermons, and to organize attacks on mosques and public figures which could then be blamed on the Tudeh. The CIA, seemingly independently of the Truman administration and the state department, also used BEDAMN against Mussadiq's National Front, making efforts to provoke splits and approaching Kashani, Baqa'i and others through intermediaries with incentives to break from Mussadiq.<sup>105</sup> Other more official American pressures were exerted in this period, such as Harriman's suggestion to the shah in 1951 that Mussadiq be replaced as prime minister by Qavam, the move which failed in July 1952. U.S. policy was increasingly dictated by a reflex anti-communism which failed to distinguish Third World nationalists from pro-Soviet forces; in the context of the Truman doctrine aimed at containing revolutionary movements in the Third World, Mussadiq was a somewhat ambivalent phenomenon—a non-communist nationalist. In January 1952 the U.S. state department described American interests and objectives in Iran:

(1) Our primary objective is the maintenance of Iran as an independent country aligned with the free world. A secondary objective is to assure access of the Western world to Iran's petroleum, and as a corollary to deny access to the Soviet bloc.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Eisenhower to Mussadiq, June 29, 1953, quoted in Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 104.

<sup>104</sup> Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 90.

<sup>105</sup> Gasiorowski, "The 1953 *Coup d'Etat* in Iran," 267-69.

<sup>106</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Steering Group on Preparations for the talks between the President and Prime Minister Churchill: Iran," January 5, 1952, quoted in Dorman and Farhang, *The U.S. Press and Iran*, 36.

As late as the end of 1952 state department analysts concluded that Mussadiq should be accorded support and understanding. The newly-installed Eisenhower administration however came increasingly to see Mussadiq as a direct or indirect threat to the status quo. In April 1953 secretary of state John Foster Dulles noted: "there has developed a spirit of nationalism (in the Middle East) which has at times grown fanatical in its opposition to the Western powers."<sup>107</sup> Whereas the Truman administration had generally favored the independent American oil companies, the Eisenhower regime listened more attentively to the international oil cartel. Dulles and his brother Allen (head of the CIA) were senior partners in the law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell which had long represented the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Though John Foster Dulles was stating in June 1953 that "The United States will avoid any unwanted interference in the oil dispute," the truth is that serious planning for a coup had begun in late 1952 in joint consultations with the British. The details of these plans and their execution will be considered presently.<sup>108</sup>

The Soviet Union did not return to a position of real influence in Iran after the 1946 débâcle. In fact, it did almost nothing to support Mussadiq, but nevertheless was perceived as a serious threat to Iranian independence by the United States, thereby dealing a double blow to the National Front's cause. Economically, it obstinately refused to repatriate the \$20 million it still owed the Iranian state from World War 2. This exacerbated considerably the regime's fiscal crisis. Barter and trade with the Soviet Union did increase in the 1952-53 period and contributed to the balancing of Iran's trade, but when the Caspian fisheries concession finally expired in January 1953 Iran was in no mood for a renewal. Politically, the U.S.S.R. maintained formal relations with the Mussadiq government, but in Diba's judgment, "the Soviet attitude ... vacillated between a 'hands-off' policy and the maintenance of correct but politically distant relations."<sup>109</sup> This reserve and the underlying lack of clarity in its assessment of the National Front was a factor (directly or indirectly) in Tudeh policy, which also

<sup>107</sup> "The First 90 Days," address by Secretary of State Dulles, April 18, 1953, in *Department of State Bulletin* (April 27, 1953), 605, quoted by Ashraf, "Iran," 98.

<sup>108</sup> "Report on the Near and Middle East by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles" (June 1, 1953), pp. 337-342 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 340. For this paragraph, see also Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 123-24; Powers, "A Book Held Hostage," 438-39; Ashraf, "Iran," 106-8, 111; and Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran*, 183.

<sup>109</sup> Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 138. Elsewhere he judges that "Soviet policy towards Mossadegh wavered from uncertainty to indirect sympathy": *ibid.*, 198.

hurt the movement a great deal. When Stalin died in March 1953 Soviet diplomatic initiatives became even more tentative, and further removed the country from the international arena. There was thus little credible Soviet geo-political threat to Iran, but Mussadiq's resolute non-alignment unfortunately appeared all too pro-Soviet to a West accustomed to thinking of Iran as a country which must be in a subordinate relation to one or another "greater" power.<sup>110</sup>

No other country was in a position to pick up the slack in terms of economic or political support for Iran. Trade increased with Germany (to 13-16 percent of imports and exports) and Japan (to 6-8 percent), but in the early postwar world-system neither, obviously, could aspire to play a major role in distant Iran. Japan and Italy did agree to purchase Iranian oil in spite of the blockade, but were unable to do so in any large quantities.<sup>111</sup>

The sum of these vectors of external relations was the isolation of the Mussadiq government from effective support internationally in its struggle with Great Britain, and moreover to align against it the considerable resources of American foreign policy by 1953, the critical year for the nationalist movement. Iran was once again enmeshed in a geo-political battle not of its own making, but which would affect it with irresistible force, tipping the scales in an internal social struggle.

### III.D. The Coup of 28 Mordad/August 19, 1953

What were the causes of the coup d'état of August 19, 1953 (known as 28 Mordad for the date according to the Iranian calendar)? Social scientists and historians have emphasized varying factors. Zabih and Abrahamian stress internal reasons, such as the importance of the mistakes made by Mussadiq or the growing strength of a conservative opposition. Kermit Roosevelt (one of the CIA operatives involved) and Gasiorowski highlight the role played by outside forces, arguing that the coup would never have succeeded without American involvement. A few writers, notably Keddie,

<sup>110</sup> This paragraph draws on Rey, "Persia in Perspective—2," 86; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II, 150; "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 416, based on D. Beloshapkin, "Economic Relations between the USSR and Persia," in *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya*, number 9 (1954); Abrahamian, "Strength and Weaknesses," 223; Zabih, *The Left in Contemporary Iran*, 9; and Zabih, *The Mossadeh Era*, 133.

<sup>111</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108-9 table 3, 113 table 5.

Katouzian and to a lesser extent Cottam, have noted the importance of both internal and external factors, a more judicious judgment in my view.<sup>112</sup> Each of these factors, internal and external, played a role, and must be carefully appraised. Ultimately, they are inter-related in a fashion such that no one could have succeeded without the others, a conclusion which will hopefully emerge from the following account of the background events, actors involved and the flow of events during and after the coup itself.

**Prelude to a coup.** From January to August 1953 both domestic and international developments buffeted the Mussadiq administration, finally building to a tense height on the eve of the coup. In January the National Front suffered the defections of Kashani, Baqa'i and other leaders, as already mentioned. In February, General Fazlullah Zahidi was arrested for plotting with foreigners to overthrow the government; his release can be seen in retrospect as an error. On February 28 came the abortive coup attempt through royalist rioting possibly directed at the assassination of Mussadiq. On March 20 the latest Western proposals on the oil problem were rejected. The end of April brought the kidnap and murder of police chief General Muhammad Afshartus, a man loyal to Mussadiq. This was followed by street clashes which continued into June between groups of royalists, nationalists and factions inside and outside the movement. In late May Mussadiq requested help in marketing oil from the Eisenhower administration; the negative American response came on June 29, 1953.<sup>113</sup>

In the meantime a constitutional crisis was brewing. The opposition deputies boycotted sessions, refusing to allow a quorum to vote on the extent of the shah's powers. In late June Dr. 'Abdullah Muazimi, the National Front's candidate for speaker of the majlis, narrowly defeated Kashani, 41 to 32. Mussadiq began to seriously consider dissolving the majlis, something which only the shah could do, although the prime minister could request it. In late July the National Front deputies prepared the way for this by resigning en masse, followed by most of the independents who

<sup>112</sup> See Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 126, 143-45; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 274-75; Powers, "A Book Held Hostage," (on Roosevelt's *Countercoup* account), 437; Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 277, 286 notes 73, 74 and 76; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 140; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 178-81; and Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 229-30.

<sup>113</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 138-39; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 98-105.

thought it prudent to emulate them in hopes of being re-elected. This was followed by a national referendum on whether the majlis should be dissolved—an extraordinary event—between August 3 and 10. The opposition boycotted the vote; the National Front was supported in it by the Tudeh, tribes, and peasants. In non-secret (i.e. rather coercive) balloting the results were a landslide for Mussadiq: 2,043,389 votes for, only 1,207 against. On August 12 Mussadiq demanded the shah's farman to dissolve the majlis, setting the scene for the crucial events of August 16-19.<sup>114</sup>

**The coup-makers.** The British, the United States and a variety of conservative Iranian elements collaborated in planning and carrying out the series of moves that resulted in the overthrow of Mussadiq. The first plans were drawn up by British intelligence and the foreign office as early as June 1951. The British had planned an invasion of Abadan in autumn 1951 but called it off when Truman withheld American support and pushed for negotiations instead. In January 1952 Churchill and Truman dined together, prompting the British prime minister to remark to the American secretary of state Dean Acheson, "Around that table this evening were gathered the governments of the world—not to dominate, mind you—but to save it."<sup>115</sup> Serious Anglo-American coup planning began in late 1952 after the British embassy staff was forced to leave Iran, and the Eisenhower administration had come into office. Two weeks after the latter's inauguration, on February 3, 1953, the two sides met and agreed to a plan for the overthrow of Mussadiq and his replacement as prime minister by General Zahidi, a plan codenamed AJAX. Besides the oil boycott and economic blockade, the British contribution was its network of Iranian intelligence operatives inside the country—"Majlis members, royal court officials, newsmen, bank officials, both active and retired military officers and even the bazaaris and some of the clerics."<sup>116</sup>

The CIA already had its ongoing anti-Tudeh operation BEDAMN in place. Its focus was simply changed to a direct attack on Mussadiq. Indeed the anti-communist mentality of the highest levels of the CIA and the state department seems to have been such that there was no problem in

<sup>114</sup> Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 108-13; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 178; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 274; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 282-83; *New York Times*, August 11, 1953.

<sup>115</sup> Quoted by Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 180.

<sup>116</sup> Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 140. See also Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 263-64, 270-72.

blurring the distinction between Mussadiq and the communist "threat" to Iran. Money was spent on anti-Mussadiq newspaper articles, radio broadcasts and to purchase demonstrators at the crucial moment. Contacts with opposition members of the majlis, retired and active army officers, and the shah himself were made. On August 10 CIA director Allen Dulles, American ambassador to Iran Loy Henderson and the shah's twin sister Ashraf met at a Swiss resort, while Brigadier General Norman Schwartzkopf conferred with the shah at his summer palace on the Caspian. Thus was set in motion "the first peacetime use of covert action by the United States to overthrow a foreign government."<sup>117</sup>

These foreign plotters worked with a variety of internal elements to plan and carry out their coup. The most important of these were Zahidi as the man designated to replace Mussadiq, the agents such as Nerren, Cilley and the Rashidian brothers who made contacts and mobilized crowds, and the shah himself who played a reluctant but significant role if only as a figurehead and rallying point. Zahidi, a landowner from Rasht whose career had spanned high military, police and government posts, coordinated a group of retired officers of the secret Committee to Save the Nation, and key active personnel including commander of the Imperial Guards Colonel Nasiri, air force chief General Gilanshah, tank commanders in Tehran and the heads of the secret police and gendarmerie. The shah was at first noncommittal and hesitant when Schwartzkopf broached the suggestion that he dismiss Mussadiq at the height of his popularity and try to put Zahidi in his place, but finally agreed to it after he was radioed assurances of official American and British involvement. Not a part of the actual plotting but ready to play supporting roles were certain ulama such as Ayatullah Bihbihani, large merchants, tribal chiefs and landlords, dissaffected majlis deputies, the religious extremists of the Fada'iyān-i Islam, luti elements led by Sha'ban "Bimokh" (the Brainless), and the social forces associated with each of these, many encouraged by the anti-National Front slogan, "Better Shah than the Tudeh."<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Gasiorowski, "The 1953 *Coup d'Etat* in Iran," 261. See also *ibid.*, 272, 275-76, 277, 284 notes 58 and 59; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 124-25, 140-41; Ashraf, "Iran," 117 note 2, quoting Eisenhower's address to the U.S. governors' conference in the *New York Times*, August 5, 1953; and Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup. The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), a first-hand account whose accuracy has been questioned on some points but which is on the whole quite revealing.

<sup>118</sup> On these internal actors, see Gasiorowski, "The 1953 *Coup d'Etat* in Iran," 273, 276-77, 286 note 72; *New*

**The course of events.** With the majlis dissolved (or almost) after the referendum, it was unclear, from a constitutional point of view, whether the shah could dismiss the prime minister. Nevertheless, this is the form the first coup attempt took, on the night of August 15-16. The shah sent Colonel Nasiri of the Imperial Guards late at night to Mussadiq's house with a decree dismissing him and appointing Zahidi in his place. Prepared for such a move, Mussadiq ordered his own guards to arrest Nasiri and the Imperial Guards unit at Shemiran outside Tehran, where foreign minister Husain Fatemi and other National Front members had been detained, thus completely forestalling the shah's attempted constitutional coup.<sup>119</sup>

Having failed to oust Mussadiq, the shah flew out of the country on Sunday, August 16, first to Baghdad and then to Rome. Zahidi went into hiding at a CIA safe-house in Tehran. That morning Mussadiq addressed the country over the radio, stating that he was taking full control of the government, dissolving the majlis. His position was that the decree dismissing him was a forgery or illegal, since only the majlis could dismiss a prime minister. The shah claimed that only he could dissolve the majlis, while CIA operatives made copies of the shah's decree available to the press to bolster Zahidi's claim. Meanwhile, foreign minister Fatemi made a fiery speech calling for the abolition of the monarchy. The flight of the shah was greeted by widespread demonstrations of popular approval: statues of Reza Shah and Muhammad Reza Shah were toppled in Tehran and Hamadan, portraits were taken down in restaurants, offices, homes and even public buildings.<sup>120</sup>

On Monday and Tuesday, August 17-18, demonstrations occurred during which crowds clashed with the police, stoned American cars and ransacked U.S. information centers in Tehran and the provinces. Slogans included the call for a republic. Gasiorowski documents that CIA agents Nerren and Cilley hired some participants in these anti-shah demonstrations, while some were right-wing Pan-Iran Party members, real Tudeh members naturally joining in. U.S. ambassador Henderson asked

*York Times*, August 20, 1953; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 278-80; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 162 note 21, 189; and Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 114-15, 124-25, 128.

<sup>119</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 178; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 116-17; Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 273.

<sup>120</sup> Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 273; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 134; *New York Times*, August 18, 1953.

Mussadiq to break them up with the police, and in a fateful decision, Mussadiq agreed. The Tudeh then called its cadres off the streets. In part the Tudeh may have done this because it realized the crowds were organized by provocateurs. Other explanations include miscalculation and confusion on its part, or the adoption of a wait-and-see attitude toward events not of its own making. The next day, as the coup unfolded, Mussadiq (perhaps fearing a civil war) denied a Tudeh request to arm the population to resist, and his own National Front supporters also stayed off the streets as he had asked them to do on the 18th, to restore order.<sup>121</sup>

These events prepared the way for the easy success of the second coup on Wednesday August 19. On this day, under cover of a pro-shah demonstration, army units took the radio station, moved tanks into central Tehran, and fought a pitched battle around Mussadiq's house, from which he was convinced to flee by his associates. Zahidi announced the success of the coup on the radio, imposed a curfew and pledged to prepare for the shah's return. By nightfall the city was calm, and in the army's hands. The coup-makers had played the decisive role in all of these events. The several thousand people in the royalist crowd consisted of luti and urban marginals mobilized by Sha'ban Bimokh and Ayatullah Bihbihani, peasants trucked in from the countryside and some onlookers either angered or worried by the "Tudeh" demonstrations or disillusioned with Mussadiq. They were paid with CIA funds provided to Iranian operatives. The exact role played by Kashani is unclear: at the least he is alleged to have stayed on the sidelines, as did the Tudeh and National Front (who had been so directed by their leaders); at the most he seems to have led one crowd and may have received money through intermediaries whom he didn't know were paid by the CIA. Cottam's account uses the term "Bihbihani dollars" for the CIA money used to mobilize the crowd; so much American money flooded the market that the value of the dollar fell precipitously.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 120, 135, 137, 167 note 4; Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 274, 285 note 66; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 176; *New York Times*, August 19 and 20, 1953; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 190-92; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 324-25.

<sup>122</sup> For the events of August 19 I have drawn on Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 179; Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era*, 120-23, 138-39; *New York Times*, August 20 and 24, 1953; Abrahamian, "The Crowd in Iranian Politics," 207; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 140; Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup d'Etat in Iran," 274, 285 note 67; Richard and Gladys Harkness, "The Mysterious Doings of CIA" (Part Two), in the *Saturday Evening Post* (November 6, 1954), 68; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 155; and Algar's 1982 lectures at Berkeley on Islam in Iran.

The coup itself claimed 300 lives. In the next few days there was passive resistance in the bazaar and provinces, met by hundreds of arrests under martial law. National Front leaders received jail terms of up to ten years; foreign minister Fatemi was executed. The Tudeh Party was even more ruthlessly repressed: between 1953 and 1957 40 officials were executed, 14 tortured to death, 200 imprisoned for life and 3,000 rank and file members were arrested. The leading Qashqa'i chiefs were exiled from Iran, their property confiscated. Mussadiq defended himself eloquently at his court martial; the court was unable to sentence him to death. He spent three years in prison followed by strict house arrest in his village, unable to communicate with his country, until his death in 1967.<sup>123</sup> The new Zahidi regime restored the monarchy, soon benefited from massive American aid and in 1954 made a deal with the international oil cartel to resolve the oil dispute on terms short of a thorough-going nationalization. These are all subjects for Chapter Eight.

#### **IV. Conclusions: A Second Opportunity Missed**

Important similarities and contrasts exist between the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911 and the oil nationalization movement of 1951-53. Both saw multi-class, urban popular alliances respond to situations of dependency by initiating massive social movements aimed in part against the state and in part against foreign control of Iran. Both went through a course characterized by initial successes, followed by splits in the populist alliance which provided an opening for massive external intervention. Both were followed by a period of stronger central control under the shah, and compression of Iran's underlying social forces by the state.

The 1951-53 oil nationalization movement differed from the earlier revolution in that it emphasized the struggle against external dependency more than the internal conflict with the shah. Mussadiq was in many ways a pioneering figure in the efforts of small Third World nations to break through situations of dependency on the West. He popularized the principle of using national wealth,

<sup>123</sup> *New York Times*, August 21-25, 1953; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 193-95; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 280; Barker, "Tent Schools of the Qashqa'i," 145, 151; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 140; Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 190-95.

linking "oil, political power, sovereignty."<sup>124</sup> He wanted Iran not only to own, but to run, its oil industry, without British interference. In this he was the contemporary of Ghandi and Nehru in India, Nasser in Egypt, Sukarno in Indonesia, Nkrumah in Ghana, Ben Bellah and Boumedienne in Algeria—leaders of movements of national liberation against colonial power.

The significance of this project of overcoming dependency is also measured by the difficulties encountered along the way. Internally, the populist alliance proved impossible to hold together. The National Front itself was very popular, but weakly organized. The Tudeh Party, which represented much of the working class and intelligentsia, remained somewhat outside the alliance. The predominantly secular political culture of the movement could not appeal to all the ulama, some of whom opposed it all along and others, notably Kashani, who left it at the critical moment, siphoning off part of its social base in the bazaar and among urban marginals. Mussadiq himself was a brilliant and charismatic leader, but he also made mistakes or was forced into irresolvable contradictions, such as his inability to end the oil dispute and the assumption of plenary powers which also split off some of his original supporters such as Baqa'i, Makki and Kashani.

Nor did Mussadiq ever get full control over the institutions of the Iranian state, despite an understanding of the importance of this and valiant efforts to do so. He transformed the small eight-person National Front delegation of 1950 into a legislative force capable of guiding the whole majlis on occasion, and when this failed he managed to have himself granted extraordinary powers to rule by decree. He reduced the power of the conservative senate by adroit maneuvering, and used the referendum to dissolve the majlis when it obstructed the government. But for all his strenuous attempts he was unable to secure the loyalty of the shah's key power base in the army, which was the internal instrument of his overthrow in the end.

The army and shah were guided largely by plans originating from outside the country. In the three-way struggle among the great powers that began during World War 2, first the Soviet Union dropped out of the picture with the defeat of the separatist movements in 1946, and then Britain was

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<sup>124</sup> Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 202. This paragraph draws on Diba's discussion of Mussadiq's significance generally.

largely checkmated in 1951-52 by the nationalization of the AIOC and severance of diplomatic relations. Unable to confront Iran alone, Britain brought the United States into the conflict, literally handing over the plans for a coup, and ultimately losing its hegemonic position in Iran to the American government and oil companies. Iran was in the balance in 1952-53, with a real chance for independence and non-dependence, but a fateful combination of internal problems encountered by the populist alliance, and the intervention of powerful external forces caused Mussadiq's bid to fall short. Our argument has been that internal and external factors were inter-related in such a way that no one could have succeeded without the presence of all the others, and the parameters of both were set by the nature of the populist alliance on the one hand and the situation of dependency on the other.<sup>125</sup>

Iran was thus sentenced to another cycle of dependent development and compression of social forces by a repressive state before a third great revolution would bring together in powerful fashion the twin struggles against the state embodied in the Constitutional Revolution and against external domination as articulated in the Mussadiq period. The events of 1951-53 therefore stand as a second historical opportunity for development that was missed.

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<sup>125</sup> The similarities between the 1953 coup in Iran and the 1973 coup in Chile are uncanny. In broad outline they share the combination of governmental problems, internal opposition and external intervention. More specifically, we can note the nationalization of a key raw material (oil, copper), economic blockade by the world power affected, internal popularity but failure of the government to control the army and other elements of the state, and a coup plan designed in the United States by the CIA. There were of course differences in the degree of internal reforms, role of communists in the alliance, opposition of the United States versus Great Britain, proximity of the Soviet Union, strength and class composition of the populist alliance, etc. But even Mussadiq's last speech in public, at his trial after the coup, bears remarkable similarities with Allende's last radio address. Mussadiq said: "Since it is evident, from the way that this tribunal is being run, that I will end my days in the corner of some prison, and since this may be the last time that I am able to address myself to my beloved nation, I beseech every man and woman to continue in the glorious path which they have begun, and not to fear anything" (quoted by Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 189). Salvador Allende addressed Chile on September 11, 1973: "Probably Radio Magallanes will be silenced and the calm metal of my voice will not reach you. It does not matter.... I have faith in Chile and in her destiny. Others will surmount this gray, bitter moment in which treason seeks to impose itself. You must go on, knowing that sooner rather than later the grand avenues will open along which free people will pass to build a better society" (speech in Laurence Birns, editor, *The End of Chilean Democracy* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), slightly changed translation).

**Chapter Eight**  
**The New Situation of Dependency:**  
**Dependent Capitalist Development**  
**Under Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, 1953-1977**

Has Riza Khan any sons worthy to succeed him?...

—Lt. Col. Sir Wolseley Haig, "The Rise of Riza Khan Pahlavi" (1925), 632.

\* \* \*

A Wolf's offspring will always be a wolf (*aghabat  
gorgzadeh gorg shavad*).

—Sa'adi, thirteenth-century verse, quoted in R. K. Ramazani, "Who Lost America? The Case of Iran," pp. 5-21 in *Middle East Journal*, volume 36, number 1 (Winter 1982), 7.

The period from the coup of 1953 that restored the shah to the throne until the eve of the revolution that would send him out of the country forever in 1978-79 marked a new chapter in the changing social structure of Iran—one of transformation of pre-capitalist agriculture and rapid industrialization in the urban sector, fueled by enormous oil revenues. These dramatic changes in the Iranian political economy set the stage for the mass upheaval of 1978-79, and the contradictions bound up in this process have been theorized in a variety of ways by observers of Iran. For some, the shah attempted to "modernize" Iran too quickly, touching off strains which society could not absorb, and resisted. For others he did not achieve results quickly enough, leaving the country underdeveloped, despite promises of creating an industrial power and a "great civilization." Beyond these simple assertions (shared by various members of the Iranian elite and American policymakers), scholars too have pronounced diverging judgments and posited alternative causes. Ervand Abrahamian argues that much of the oil revenue was productively invested, and that considerable growth and development occurred, adding up to "a minor industrial revolution." Ahmad Ashraf (as early as 1971) and

Homa Katouzian challenged the idea that economic growth alone meant anything like an integrated form of development. Nikki Keddie and Amin Saikal attributed most of Iran's problems and accomplishments to its status as a rentier state dependent on oil revenues for its growth; Marxists such as Patrick Clawson and Assef Bayat saw wider causes in "the internationalization of capital" and "uneven development" in the world economy and in Iran.<sup>1</sup>

These conflicting assessments parallel the earlier debates we have examined in Chapter Four about the nature of social structural change during the Qajar period in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and our proposed resolution is again the heuristic concept of "dependent development," this time of a more decisively capitalist kind, but again as a paradigm embracing both internal modes of production and the external pressures of the world-system. A number of attempts have been made to apply *dependence* in some form to Iran, but these have been either very loose (Keddie, Saikal, Pesaran), simplistic (Motameni) or one-sidedly negative (Zavareei) theoretically.<sup>2</sup> Following Cardoso and Faletto, my use of *dependent development* is a more wide-ranging, historical-structural method of analysis aimed at discerning both the reality and limits of economic growth in Iran, and concerned not just with industrialization, state and bourgeoisie, but with the whole class structure of Iran, and culture and politics in addition to the economy. The chapter that follows will trace this

<sup>1</sup> See Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 427ff.; Ashraf, "Iran," ix; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*; Nikki Keddie, "The Midas Touch: Black Gold, Economics and Politics in Iran Today," pp. 243-266 in *Iranian Studies*, volume X, number 4 (Autumn 1977); Patrick Clawson, "Capital Accumulation in Iran," pp. 143-171 in Petter Nore and Terisa Turner, editors, *Oil and Class Struggle* (London: Zed, 1980); and Assef Bayat, *Workers and Revolution in Iran: A Third World Experience of Workers' Control* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, Ltd., 1987), 19, 53. The "internationalization of capital" approach, as used by Clawson to refer to the outward expansion of capitalism to all areas of the world sounds no different from world-system theory to me, while Bayat's and others' use of the term "uneven development" bears a striking resemblance to modes of production analysis, or in some cases, to dependent development. Neither adds precision to the perspectives we are already working with (though as suggested, neither is incompatible with them).

<sup>2</sup> See the theoretical disclaimers of Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 143-44; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 5-6; and M. H. Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism in Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Iran," pp. 501-522 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 14, number 4 (November 1982), 504. I think that Keddie, a historian, and Pesaran, an economist, are reacting to the more one-sided versions of dependency advanced in the early works of Andre Gunder Frank, and would be less uncomfortable with the more sociologically sophisticated version of Cardoso and Faletto that gives due emphasis to both internal aspects of social structure and historical factors generally. Reza Motameni, "An Inquiry Into Iran's Underdevelopment: A Quarter Century of Dependent Development," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Government, Claremont Graduate School (1981), is simplistic in hypothesizing that "A high level of economic dependency is likely to coincide with low rates of economic growth" (96), but does offer an econometric test of dependence in Iran that is of some interest. Manizheh Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development in Iran and the Mass Uprising of 1979," pp. 139-188 in Paul Zarembka, editor, *Research in Political Economy: A Research Annual*, volume 5 (Greenwich, CT, and London: JAI Press, Inc., 1982), is not theoretically grounded or historically informed, but does provide much useful insight into the period covered in this chapter. As noted in Chapter One, Bizhan Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution* (esp. 73-124), was a pioneer in applying a model of dependent capitalism to Iran, though not in the historical or theoretical manner adopted in the present work.

web of dependent relations through the state, class structure and foreign relations of Iran. Chapter Nine will then take up the effects of this type of development on the groups and classes in the Iranian social formation that came together to make the revolution as a result of the quarter century of dependent development analyzed here.

## **I. The Pahlavi State: Monarchic Dictatorship and Oil Rents**

M. H. Pesaran has made the useful point that there are two types of political stability—one brought about by increased participation, and the other, by repression.<sup>3</sup> Of these, the state forged by Muhammad Reza Pahlavi between 1953 and 1978 clearly adhered to the method of repression, seeking to impose a second compression of social forces upon Iranian society as his father had done between 1925 and 1941. Like Reza Shah, his state reposed on the army, oil revenues and an even more dependent relationship with a leading core economy—the United States. In this section we shall trace the evolution of monarchic dictatorship between 1953 and 1978, focusing on its key institutions and social basis, and leaving Iran's relationship with external powers for the most part to sections II and III below.

### **I.A. The Evolution of the State**

The Pahlavi state developed over a decade into a monarchic dictatorship relying on a repressive army and oil revenues as the twin sources of its hegemony in Iranian society. Before reaching a position of unchallenged supremacy in the polity, the shah had to pass through several moments of trial. In the immediate aftermath of the 1953 coup, General Zahedi served as a strong-man prime minister, overseeing the suppression of the Tudeh Party and National Front with arrests and executions, and initiating a continual harassment and intimidation of opposition in the bazaars, factories, army, tribal areas and universities. The 1954 oil deal (to be discussed below) resolved the oil crisis and restored a much-needed source of revenue to the state. In a first trial, Zahedi, who had arrogated

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<sup>3</sup> Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 505.

the posts of minister of war, foreign affairs, interior and communications, was successfully removed from power in April 1955 and sent to Switzerland to treat, in Katouzian's words, a "non-existent illness" (he never returned to Iran although his son Ardishir, who is quoted in the final epigraph to Chapter Seven, later married the shah's daughter and served as ambassador to Washington). The far more compliant Manuchihr Iqbal, who referred to himself as "the house-born slave of His Majesty," took over as prime minister. Another apparent threat to the state was thwarted in 1958 when a plot to carry out a coup under general Qarani, chief of army intelligence, was uncovered and ended in a secret trial and imprisonment of the general (Katouzian conjectures that there was American support for such a plot, which remains a hazy and bizarre episode for want of further evidence).<sup>4</sup>

A far more serious challenge arose between 1960 and 1963 in the form of mass political movements and outside pressure for reforms (the 1963 uprising will be examined in further detail in Chapter Nine). A balance of payments crisis from 1958 to 1960 set the stage for a revival of political activity by the National Front in 1960-61. The shah was forced to annul two patently fraudulent majlis elections, while the Kennedy administration pressed him to appoint the liberal critic 'Ali Amini as prime minister in 1961 and to embark on a program of land reform. The proposed land reform met with the wrath not only of landlords but of leading ulama, some of whom also opposed American influence in Iran, Pahlavi autocracy and electoral reforms granting women the vote. The National Front failed to respond to overtures from Amini and both were maneuvered back into obscurity by late 1962, but the ulama campaign against the state and foreign influence became stronger. Finally, the government ordered a bloody confrontation in June 1963 that resulted in many hundreds of deaths (some say up to 15,000), and the arrest and eventual exile of a new popular leader, Ayatullah Ruhullah Khomeini. By this combination of coopting secular politicians through claiming the land reform as its own and militarily repressing its religious opponents and their supporters, the regime emerged after 1963 as the overwhelming center of power in Iran, now with more

<sup>4</sup> On the personages and events mentioned in this paragraph, see *New York Times*, August 20, 1953; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 178; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 421; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 195-96, 199; and Dr. 'Ali Amini, in an interview recorded by Habib Ladjevardi, December 6, 1981, Paris, English translation of Persian original, Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University, tape 6.

or less unconditional American support as the only viable political option for the country.<sup>5</sup> The shah was thereafter free to fully implement his own vision of state power—a system of militarized, dependent, monarchic dictatorship whose principal institutions we may now examine.

### **I.B. The State as a Set of Institutions**

The main institutions of the Pahlavi monarchic dictatorship, in descending order of functional significance, consisted of the oil revenues, the repressive apparatus, the bureaucracy and the party system. Over all of these presided the main beneficiaries of the system—the shah, royal family and the court.

Though technically part of the economy, the oil sector was both so isolated from it and so instrumental to the rest of the state that it is best analyzed as a state institution. While Mussadiq had managed to run the government largely without oil revenues between 1951 and 1953, the Pahlavi state would have been unthinkable without the vast income generated by the royalties received on the sale of Iran's oil. The chief characteristics of this state—monarchy, dictatorship, dependency, developmentalism and capitalism—all literally flowed from its monopoly of this vital resource. In 1954 the shah negotiated a new agreement with the West to produce and export oil. Iran was made the nominal owner of its oil (thus preserving the fiction of nationalization) while a consortium of British Petroleum (the new name for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, with a 40 percent share), five major American companies (35 percent), Royal Dutch Shell (14 percent), the French CFP (6 percent) and small American independents (5 percent) contracted to extract and market the resource for 25 years (renewable for 15 more). The British AIOC was compensated by a huge 25 million pound payment. Profits were to be shared between Iran and the consortium on a 50-50 basis; Iran's share was raised to 56.25 percent in 1962 and 61.25 percent in 1970. Although more favorable agreements were concluded with Italian, Canadian, German, Japanese and American companies in later years, the

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<sup>5</sup> A few sources on the 1960-63 period include Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 93-111; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 149-59; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 421-26; and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 208-32. These events will be briefly compared with those of the 1977-79 revolution in Chapter Nine.

consortium controlled the vast majority of Iran's oil, making the key decisions on prices and production levels. By one estimate, between 1954 and 1963 the consortium made a profit of \$12.56 on each ton of oil, while Iran received only \$1.50.<sup>6</sup>

Despite being exploited vis-a-vis the consortium, the Iranian state received considerable income from oil, especially after the formation of OPEC in 1960 and the threat of oil boycotts following the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars led to dramatic price rises. Iran's oil revenues leaped *almost a thousand times* from \$22.5 million in 1954 to \$20 billion in 1977. Income rose from \$4-5 billion in 1973 to \$17-19 billion in 1974, without any increase in production as the price for a barrel of oil jumped from \$1.95 to \$7. Annual production did rise over this period from 390 million barrels in 1960 and 780 million in 1966 to 1,234 million in 1969 and 1,913 million in 1978 (at this level oil reserves would run dry about the year 2000). Iran also has the world's largest natural gas reserves. The share of oil and gas reserves in financing Iran's development plans increased inexorably from 50 percent in the 1950s to 63 percent between 1962 and 1972 to 80 percent after 1974. In 1977/78 oil accounted for 38 percent of GNP, 77 percent of the state's income, and 87 percent of foreign exchange. All of these figures suggest the huge role that came to be played by oil in the 1970s, for the economy as a whole and the state in particular. In a literal sense the state was dependent on oil income, and the economy would come to depend greatly on the state.<sup>7</sup>

The first beneficiaries of this oil rent were the shah, royal family and the court. The line between the state and the shah continued to be blurred as it had since Safavid times and earlier. The National Iranian Oil Company secretly channelled a significant portion of its earnings—reportedly at

<sup>6</sup> Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 184. This paragraph draws on Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 48-51, 97ff.; Günter Barthel, "The Struggle for the Re-establishment of National Rights Over Iranian Oil," pp. 50-71 in Günter Barthel, editor, *Iran: From Monarchy to Republic*, special issue number 12 of *Asia, Africa, Latin America* (East Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1983), 66 table 1, 67 table 2; Esmail Baku, "Oil Revenue and Socio-Economic Development in Iran, 1963-78," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1980), 80-81; and "The Iran-Consortium Agreement" (September 19-20, 1954), pp. 348-383 in Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, II.

<sup>7</sup> Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 50-51, 104-31; Halliday, *Iran*, 143 table 10; Graham, *Iran*, 15-16, 36-38; Barthel, "The Struggle for the Re-establishment of National Rights," 71 table 6; Clawson, "Capital Accumulation," 143; Hans-Georg Müller, "Remarks on the Role of the State Capital Sector and National Private Capital in the Evolutionary Process of Capitalism in Iran Up to the End of the 1970s," pp. 72-87 in Barthel, editor, *Iran: From Monarchy to Republic*, 73 table; M. H. Pesaran (under the pseudonym of Thomas Walton), "Economic Development and Revolutionary Upheavals in Iran," pp. 271-292 in *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, volume 4, number 3 (September 1980), 279.

least \$1 billion in 1976—to the shah. In 1958 the shah established the Pahlavi Foundation, worth over \$3 billion by the late 1970s, to manage funds for royal projects, deliver pensions and grants to clients, and control such key economic sectors as large-scale agriculture, housing and construction materials, insurance, hotels, autos, textiles, food-processing and publishing, with shares in some 207 companies in all. The royal family numbered some 63 princes, princesses and cousins of the shah, worth a total of \$5-20 billion, derived from the largest agribusinesses and industrial enterprises in Iran. The system was rife with officially sanctioned corruption, bribe-taking and greed, from the shah to his sister Ashraf to the minister of court Assadullah 'Alam on down through the officer corps and economic elite, with each maintaining a mini-court of his or her own, surrounding themselves with clients and attaching a portion of all major contracts in the economy. The lowest estimates of official corruption through the taking of commissions are of \$1 billion between 1973 and 1976.<sup>8</sup> This siphoning off of the economic surplus and its disbursement throughout the upper echelons of Iranian society was one material base of the shah's power and secured the allegiance of his associates to the state and to his person.<sup>9</sup>

A second institutional base of power was the repressive apparatus, including the intelligence services and the armed forces. The Iranian military always enjoyed a high proportion of the budget, in the 25-40 percent range from the 1950s to the 1970s. When the oil boom occurred, the flood gates opened, with defense expenditures leaping from \$1.9 billion in 1973/74 to \$9.9 billion in 1978/79, and the size of the armed forces from 191,000 to 413,000 between 1972 and 1977. Some \$10 billion in arms was purchased from the United States between 1972 and 1976, requiring the

<sup>8</sup> On court wealth and corruption, see Graham, *Iran*, 152-63; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 437-38; Ervand Abrahamian, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution," pp. 21-26 in *MERIP Reports*, number 87 (May 1980), 23; Reza Baraheni, *The Crowned Cannibals: Writings on Repression in Iran* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 43 note 46; Sir Peter Ramsbotham, in an interview recorded by Habib Ladjevardi, October 15, 1985, London, Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University, tape 1: 42, 45; Ali Amini interview, tape 6: 18; Ahmad Ghorcishi, in an interview recorded by Habib Ladjevardi, January 31, 1982, Moraga, California, English translation of Persian original, Iranian Oral History Collection, tape 1: 29, 35.

<sup>9</sup> In this respect the Pahlavi state fits the type of the "neo-patrimonial" state described by Eisenstadt—a high degree of patronage, highly personal, "with a chief executive who maintains his position less by a strong bureaucracy enforcing the law than by securing the support of elites and bureaucrats through an extensive and informal system of personal rewards. In such a state, the bureaucracy and armed forces may be kept weak and divided, while corruption may be encouraged, in order to maximize the dependence of military and civil officials on the patronage of the chief executive": Jack A. Goldstone, "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions," pp. 187-207 in *Annual Review of Sociology*, volume 8 (1982), 196, based on S. N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies: A Comparative Study of Civilizations* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

presence of 24,000 American personnel in Iran in 1976, and cementing the dependent relationship of Iran to the United States. Abrahamian notes that "By 1977, Iran had the largest navy in the Persian Gulf, the most up-to-date air force in the Middle East, and the fifth largest military force in the world." The army was twice as numerous and well-equipped as the British army in 1978; the air force was the fourth-largest in the world.<sup>10</sup>

After the close call in the 1953 crisis and the subsequent discovery of a Tudeh officer group in the mid-1950s, plus General Qarani's 1958 coup plot, the shah worked to gain complete control of the army, personally scrutinizing promotions and controlling the officers corps by a combination of surveillance and privileges in the form of salaries, housing and positions in government and industry. By the 1960s the shah clearly controlled the army, and the army controlled society only through the state; for this reason, Iran's was more of a monarchic than a strictly military form of dictatorship. The function of the army was partly to underwrite Iran's claims to regional paramountcy in the Middle East, Persian Gulf and Asia in the 1970s, and partly to repress domestic forces—"As US Senator Hubert Humphrey put it in 1960: 'Do you know what the head of the Iranian army told one of our people? He said the army was in good shape, thanks to US aid—it was now capable of coping with the civilian population'."<sup>11</sup>

The job of domestic repression and social control was even more specifically the domain of SAVAK and the other police and intelligence services (there were up to eight separate organizations in all, partly to keep tabs on each other). SAVAK—the name is a Persian acronym for National Intelligence and Security Organization—was organized in 1957 with help from the CIA, FBI and Israeli intelligence. Estimates of the number of SAVAK operatives range widely, reflecting the pervasive secrecy and social insecurity engendered by it, from the shah's 2,000 to as high as 200,000,

<sup>10</sup> See Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 435-36; Graham, *Iran*, 163, 168-83; Halliday, *Iran*, 90-96; and Farhad Kazemi, "The Military and Politics in Iran: The Uneasy Symbiosis," pp. 217-240 in Elic Kedourie and Sylvia G. Haim, *Towards a Modern Iran: Studies in Thought, Politics and Society* (London: Cass, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> Humphrey is quoted by Halliday, *Iran*, 75. Theodore Sorenson, advisor to Kennedy, wrote in 1965: "In Iran the Shah insisted on our supporting an expensive army too large for border incidents and internal security and of no use in an all-out war. His army ... resembled the proverbial man who was too heavy to do any light work and too light to do any heavy work": *ibid.*, 92, quoting Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York, 1965), 628. See also *ibid.*, 52, 68-71, and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 436.

with Eric Rouleau perhaps coming closest in his estimate of 50,000 full-time agents and up to three million part-time informers (one in 11 Iranians). SAVAK was active in censorship, in the government-run trade unions, in screening state employees including teachers, and in directly confronting political critics and opponents of the regime, including liberal politicians, progressive ulama and especially left-leaning students and the guerrilla organizations. SAVAK arrested and held suspects at will, without time limits; trials were secret, conducted in the absence of defense witnesses before SAVAK or military judges. Amnesty International estimated there were 25-100,000 political prisoners in 1976 and reported "No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran."<sup>12</sup> Torture was a routine, and barbarously inhuman part of the detention and interrogation process from the 1960s on. The effect aimed at by SAVAK was to "spread a deep sense of fear, suspicion, disbelief, and apathy throughout the country," and in so doing it formed an integral part of the state's overall relationship to Iranian society.<sup>13</sup>

A less coercive but equally revealing state institution was the government proper—the cabinet, ministries, civil service, majlis and political party system. The organization of these institutions reflected both the claims and the realities of the shah's monopoly of political power. Ministries were forced to compete with each other for revenues and royal favor, leading to gross inefficiencies and distortions of information. The executive branch encroached heavily on the judiciary, making much of it subordinate to the military and unnecessarily complicating such areas as commercial law. The shah himself delegated little authority, making all major decisions and many minor ones, often without accurate or sufficient technical input and advice. He ran foreign affairs by himself, rather than through the foreign ministry. A handful of his former classmates, confidants and cronies were recycled among the top posts, wielding tremendous power over all below but totally dependent on the shah for the patronage they dispensed and the authority they enjoyed. Some of these men, such

<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International, *Annual Report 1974-75* (London: AI Publications, 1975), 8. This report also noted: "The Shah of Iran retains his benevolent image despite the highest rate of death penalties in the world, no valid system of civilian courts and a history of torture which is beyond belief."

<sup>13</sup> The quote is from Zavareci, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 152. This paragraph draws on Paul Balta and Claudine Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé* (Paris: Sindbad, 1979), who cite Eric Rouleau, "Iran: The Myth and the Reality: Part 1," in *The Guardian*, October 24, 1976; Graham, *Iran*, 140-49; Halliday, *Iran*, 87-88; and Baraheni, *The Crowned Cannibals*, 131-218, with references to articles by Eric Rouleau in *Le Monde*, October 5, 1976 and Philip Jacobson in the *London Sunday Times*, January 19, 1975.

as Assadullah 'Alam, Ja'far Sharif-Imami and Iqbal, were astute but venal politicians, while others, among them Amir 'Abbas Hovaida and Jamshid Amuzegar, were European-educated technocrats with little understanding of Iranian society. Independent-minded ministers such as 'Ali Amini and Hasan Arsanjani, the architect of the original land reform, did not last long.<sup>14</sup>

Below the ministers labored the vast bureaucracy of the civil services. The civil service grew from 12 ministries and 150,000 civil servants ca. 1963 to 19 ministries and 304,000 employees in the late 1970s. There were in all some 800,000 civilian employees by 1977, reaching well down through the professional middle class into the poorly paid ranks of the service sector of the working class:

"In the towns, the state expanded to the point that it hired as many as one out of every two full-time employees."<sup>15</sup>

The majlis and political parties were perhaps less fully functioning institutions of the state than part of its legitimation mechanism. As such, they cannot have succeeded very well in burnishing the shah's image. In the aftermath of the coup the political parties of the Mussadiq era found themselves banned and a tight censorship imposed. Later in the 1950s two parties loyal to the shah were set up—the ruling Milliyun (Nationalist) Party led by prime minister Iqbal and the "oppositional" Mardom (People's) Party headed by minister of the interior 'Alam. They were popularly known as the "yes" and "yes sir" parties. The majlises of the post-1953 era were filled by landlords and other members from the elite families and as such, if not always aligned with the shah on every issue, they were certainly conservative in nature. Between 1950 and 1970 eighty percent of the members of the senate were landlords. In late 1963 the two party system became a de facto single party when the Milliyun evolved into the Iran-i Nuvin (New Iran) Party under then prime minister 'Ali Mansur and future prime minister Hovaida, and the paper opposition did not contest elections.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Graham, *Iran*, 133-38; Amini interview, tape 6: 1-4; Ghoreishi interview, tape 2: 2-5, 10, 23-28; Ramsbot- ham interview, tape 2: 18-19; Abolhassan Ebtehaj, in an interview recorded by Habib Ladjevardi, December 1, 1981, Cannes, France, English translation of Persian original, Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University, tape 10: 17; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 197, 234-35, 241.

<sup>15</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 438. Overall, the state employed about 10-12 percent of the work force.

<sup>16</sup> On the early party system, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 419-21, 440; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 192-93, 197; Ashraf, "Iran," 172; and Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 63, 90-91.

In 1961 the shah noted in his autobiography, "If I were a dictator rather than a constitutional monarch, then I might be tempted to sponsor a single dominant party such as Hitler organized or such as you find today in Communist countries."<sup>17</sup> In 1974, when foreign journalists challenged the shah on the lack of democracy in Iran, he exploded:

Freedom of thought! Freedom of thought! Democracy, democracy! With five-year-olds going on strike and parading in the streets! ... Democracy? Freedom? What do these words mean? I don't want any part of them.<sup>18</sup>

The façade of democracy and constitutionalism came down completely with the formation of just such a single party system in 1975. The new Rastakhiz-i Milli (National Resurgence) Party was set up under prime minister Hovaida and all "loyal Iranians" were ordered to participate. Some of the original members claim to have advocated a party independent of the government and that the 1975 elections featuring a choice among candidates sponsored by the party aroused more voter enthusiasm than in the previous two decades. But the Rastakhiz Party was effectively controlled by the leaders of its predecessor, the Iran-i Nuvin Party. One of its founders, Ahmad Ghereishi, noted that after the elections, "... everyone saw with amazement the same prime minister, the same ministers, 'the same soup and the same bowl'" again.<sup>19</sup> Most people entertained no illusions from the start: Ayatollah Khomeini from exile in Iraq counselled all Muslims to avoid the party, and a 1976 survey of university students turned up only 2-4 percent with any faith in the party. The Rastakhiz quickly degenerated into another elite vehicle for personal advancement, and lapsed largely into inactivity by 1977.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), 173. The shah's words are worth quoting in full: "Communist dictators resemble Fascist ones in that they enjoy holding elections. They hope to give the ordinary working man the idea that he has a voice in the Government of his country. But the Communist rulers allow only one political party; anybody who tries to start another, or who speaks against the ruling party, is likely to be liquidated. In the elections (if you can call them by that name), the voter has no choice, for the only candidates listed are those of the ruling party. Purely as a matter of form, the citizen is urged or ordered to go and vote; the authorities then triumphantly announce that, let us say, 99.9 per cent of the votes were cast for the ruling party. I wonder how many intelligent people are fooled by that sort of thing" (162). He went on to say: "... as constitutional monarch I can afford to encourage large-scale party activity free from the strait-jacket of one-party rule or the one-party state" (173). Keddie has pointed out that after the Rastakhiz Party was declared the shah recalled his autobiography and reissued it without the passages on one-party regimes as communist or fascist: *Roots of Revolution*, 179.

<sup>18</sup> The shah, in an interview with F. Fitzgerald, "Giving the Shah What He Wants," *Harper's* (November 1974), 82, quoted by Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 440-41.

<sup>19</sup> Ghereishi interview, tape 2:3. On the Rastakhiz generally, see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 242; Graham, *Iran*, 134-35; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 440-42, 445; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 190; and Sepehr Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval: An Interpretive Essay* (San Francisco: Alchemy Books, 1979), 6-13.

The shah's one-party state had revealed serious underlying problems of legitimacy.

### **I.C. The Social Bases and Legitimation of the State: Its Potential for "Autonomy"**

The Pahlavi state had both narrow and broader social bases. At its narrowest, it could be reduced to the shah himself, and there is much evidence to speak for this interpretation—the vast decision-making power wielded by the shah, his extensive wealth and central position among the economic elite, and the general tendency to credit (or conversely, to blame) him for everything that "the state" made happen. Considered as a set of institutions, the practical basis of the Pahlavi state can be broadened to include the heads of the army, cabinet, bureaucracy, party-system, etc., and it is true that these individuals also exercised enormous power in their capacities as the leading state actors, and were tightly bound up with the shah at the apex of the polity and social structure.

Raising the issue of the social bases of the state broadens its definition even further. The state, after all, employed 800,000 civilians and 400,000 military personnel, about 12 percent of the economically active population in 1978. The middle and upper echelons of these extensive organizations benefitted materially from being part of the state, and this represents a considerable number of people. The Rastakhiz Party tried to officially incorporate the political, economic, social and cultural elites and all legal associations into the Iranian state between 1975 and 1978, though as we have seen, allegiance to it did not run deep in Iranian society.

In class terms, the Pahlavi state was *autonomous* in relation to the dominant classes, in a somewhat different sense than Skocpol has employed this term. I would suggest that this state was conflated rather directly with a part of the ruling class, that is, with the royal family itself. This set it in an uneasy relationship with the rest of the ruling class—industrialists, large landlords, and its own high bureaucrats and military officers. Large landlords, as we shall see, lost political power though not their economic position, in the land reform of the 1960s. Leading businessmen were dependent on the state and foreign capital, benefitting from the relationship but also chafing under it. Only the high officials that were part of the state itself were unambiguously bound to it. The shah was so closely identified with the state that he (and it) represented the hegemonic part of the ruling

class. Autonomous from the rest of it, he was both the most powerful actor in the polity and economy and the object of resentment by other sectors of the elite and a potential target of social movements from below. The shah and state were thus autonomous within Iranian society, but dangerously so, from the point of view of their own long-term survival.

The shah's own self-conception of this autonomy and the sources of his legitimation claims on Iranian society are revealed in a 1976 text he commissioned on "The Philosophy of Iran's Revolution":

In making revolution, the leader of the nation plays the crucial role. A strong enlightened leader, fully comprehending existing conditions, nurtures and develops the idea of revolution in his mind, transfers the idea to the people and then moves to implement it.... The Shah and the People, according to the 'Philosophy of Iran's Revolution', constitute two superforces and they have allowed 'no intermediary or insulator to intervene in the direct relationship between them.'

Together they have ensured the survival of the Iranian nation. The Shahanshah moreover stands above class or the interests of special groups in society. He is king of all the people. He is also in a father-son relationship to the nation.... The Shahanshah is not just the political leader of the country. He is also in the first instance teacher and spiritual leader, an individual who not only builds his nation roads, bridges, dams and qanats but also guides the spirit, thought and hearts of his people.<sup>20</sup>

The shah's symbolic capital rested on the glories of Iran's pre-Islamic past, the paternalistic rituals of authority and patronage, and the abrogation of functional democracy in favor of a quasi-mystical union directly with the people. These claims, as we shall see, were not embraced by large segments of the population. Though there were a handful of elite pro-regime ulama, the vast majority of the clergy came to oppose the parliament on a variety of grounds in the late 1960s and 1970s. Students, intellectuals, workers, bazaar artisans and merchants, the urban poor and migrants all developed significant grievances in the course of the shah's 25 years in power after 1953. The relationship of each of these classes and groups to the state is inseparable from the trajectories of their experience under dependent capitalist development over this period, and in turn to the articulation of political cultures of opposition and resistance to that experience. Reserving the political-cultural sides of this dialectic for Chapter Nine, we may now examine the economic changes that activated them.

<sup>20</sup> From "The Philosophy of Iran's Revolution," printed in *Kayhan International*, November 11, 1976, and quoted by Graham, *Iran*, 59.

## II. The Economy and Class Structure

Iran's economy went through three discernible phases between 1953 and 1978, two of which ended in deep recessions and social upheavals. From 1953 to about 1960 came a phase of stabilization and normalization of the economy along fairly traditional dependent lines. Oil income and American economic aid were resumed, permitting a reactivation of the basic development model of the 1930s and 1940s based on long-standing agricultural practices, some light industries and imports of many consumer items. This was followed by the balance of payments crisis due to excessive imports in 1958-60 and the political instability of the 1960-63 period mentioned in section 1. The second phase from 1963 to 1973 was a period of transition to a more thoroughly capitalist economy with the land reform doing away with most sharecropping arrangements and steadily growing oil revenues used to initiate a somewhat deeper industrialization process involving infrastructural investments and more complex manufacturing of an assembly type with state and foreign help. Growth rates were steady, inflation was contained, capital from foreign aid and oil was channelled with some care within the limits imposed. After 1973 the oil boom accelerated these processes into a third phase that soon became qualitatively distinct as a full-blown dependent capitalist development going out of control. The attempt to double the goals of the fifth plan in 1975 set off a binge of epic proportions in GNP growth rates, oil revenues, arms purchases, corruption, conspicuous consumption, agribusiness schemes and heavy industrialization whose flaws we will examine in detail in this section.

Before investigating the four key sectors of the Iranian economy—agriculture, pastoralism, capitalist and petty-commodity manufacturing—the basic aggregate contours of these two and a half decades can be suggested, in terms of trends in population and gross national product. Population grew from 14.6 million in 1940 to 20.4 million in 1956, 27.1 million in 1966 and 33.6 million in 1976, at a high rate that reached 3.2 percent annually in the late 1970s. But this growth was very unevenly distributed by sector, as the proportion of the population living in cities rose from 22 percent in 1940 to 31 percent in 1956, 39 percent in 1966 and 47 percent in 1976. This meant a great underlying shift from agricultural to urban service and industrial occupations and a vast migration of

peasants into the cities. The epicenter of this demographic explosion was Tehran, which grew from 2.5 million in 1970 to 5 million in 1977, a sprawling primate city larger than the next dozen cities combined and containing 14 percent of Iran's entire population.<sup>21</sup>

Gross national product meanwhile rose at a significantly faster rate than population. Fueled largely first by increased oil production and then by the much higher oil prices of the post-1973 period, it passed from \$3 billion in 1953 to \$53 billion in 1977. In per capita terms this represents almost a tenfold increase from \$166 a person in 1953 to \$1,514 in 1977, raising Iran from the ranks of the lower to the medium income countries in aggregate terms. At current prices, per capita GNP hit \$2,160 in 1978 (though without petroleum revenues this figure would be cut in half). Between 1963 and 1978 gross domestic product grew at an average annual rate of 10.8 percent, a figure which only two or three countries in the world surpassed, and only some five to eight did better in terms of per capita growth rate (for 1960-72, in order, these were Libya, Japan, Rumania, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea). These few facts alone demonstrate that rapid change and substantial "development" took place in Iran in this period. To understand the dependent side of this development however requires a closer look at the impact and distribution of these aggregate data among the sectors, classes and groups that comprised the Iranian economy and social formation.<sup>22</sup>

## II.A. Agriculture

Iranian agriculture underwent a massive qualitative transformation in the period from 1953 to 1978. This was due to the far-reaching effects (planned and unintended) of the 1960s' land reform, the centerpiece of what the shah came to regard as his "White Revolution." The centuries-old cropsharing mode of production rapidly evolved in the course of a decade into a far more capitalist

<sup>21</sup> On population see Halliday, *Iran*, 10; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 25, 26 table 1, 27 table 2, 28; and Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 184.

<sup>22</sup> For GNP and aggregate income data, see Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 22; Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 504; Pesaran, "Economic Development," 279 table 3; Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 162-63; and Ahmad Jabbari, "Economic Factors in Iran's Revolution: Poverty, Inequality, and Inflation," pp. 163-214 in Ahmad Jabbari and Robert Olson, editors, *Iran: Essays on a Revolution in the Making* (Lexington, Kentucky: Mazda Publishers, 1981), 208 Appendix A.

agriculture, whose impact on land tenure arrangements, rural class structure and agricultural performance was dramatic, and for the most part, decidedly negative.

**Land tenure: before and after the land reform.** Village social structure in the 1950s descended through the virtually all-powerful landlord to the middle class of shopkeepers and larger peasants, down to the average sharecropper and the landless peasantry. Landownership was heavily concentrated, according to various surveys. Large landlords (including the state and vaqf administrators) may have held 85-90 percent of the land. Hooglund calculates that as few as 2-3,000 families owning more than one whole village controlled 55 percent of cultivated land. Halliday finds that the largest 37 landed families alone owned 19,000 villages. Another 500,000 to one million smaller owners held much of the rest; most of these were city-dwelling investors, while some were peasant proprietors, often at the subsistence level. The vast majority of the rural population were either sharecropping peasants (perhaps 50-60 percent) or landless agricultural laborers (*khwushnishin*, at 25-40 percent). While the top several thousand landowning families had annual incomes of \$50,000 or more, the several million sharecropping and landless peasants eked out a very difficult, subsistence-level existence. Incomes of \$100 per family meant malnutrition, poor health and life expectancies as low as thirty years. Dependence on the landlord entailed poverty, indebtedness and exploitation for the vast majority. Despite the commercialization of agriculture experienced from the Qajar period on, the system as a whole remained dominated by the peasant cropsharing mode of production that had characterized Iranian agriculture since at least Safavid times.<sup>23</sup>

This system would change forever with the implementation of land reform in the 1960s. The shah was forced to extend the token sale of a few crown estates to peasants in the 1950s into a fully-fledged land reform by a complex set of pressures emanating from the Kennedy administration, the revival of the National Front, and his own calculations that such a reform could remove landed power as a challenge to the state in the countryside and secure a numerous class of landholding

<sup>23</sup> Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 190, and *Land and Revolution*, 12-28, 154 note 8; Keddie, *Historical Obstacles*, 1-2, 16-17; Halliday, *Iran*, 106-7; Ali-Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Social Formation: Pre-Capitalism, Dependent Capitalism, and the World System," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University (1983), 358-62; Ashraf, "Iran," 167; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 39-40; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 203.

peasants grateful to the regime. The first phase of land reform, proposed and carried out in 1962 under prime minister 'Ali Amini and minister of agriculture Hasan Arsanjani, was rather more progressive than the shah would have liked: it limited landlords to the equivalent of one whole village, compensating them for all land above that at its declared value for tax purposes (a bargain for the state) and then reselling the land to those peasants who sharecropped it (the "landless" non-sharecroppers were left out). Long before this phase was complete landlord protests, peasant mobilizations and his own jealousy led the shah to dismiss Amini and Arsanjani and water down the reform into a second phase in which landlords' wives and children could own a whole village and mechanized lands and orchards were exempted, and giving all landowners the option to rent, sell or divide the land with the peasants, purchase the latter's cultivating rights or form joint stock corporations with them. The shah now claimed the reform as his own "White Revolution" (as opposed to a socialist, or "red" revolution), to which various secondary principles were added, the most significant being compensation of landowners with shares of state-owned industries, a move which turned some of them into industrial capitalists. After 1967 a third phase was enacted requiring the conversion of all phase two leases into sales to peasants (thereby promoting small holdings) but on the other hand encouraging large mechanized farms, farm corporations of several villages or more and large-scale capitalist farming as well.<sup>24</sup>

Was the land reform a success? Table 8.1 summarizes the results based on the work of its leading English-language expert, Eric Hooglund. This suggests that a staggering 93 percent of former sharecroppers received land and became peasant owners by the 1970s. This may be favorably contrasted with the land reforms of Egypt, Syria and Iraq, each of which affected less than ten percent of villagers. Behind this appearance of a relative success however, Hooglund has discerned a far darker reality:

<sup>24</sup> Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 78-112; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 43-69; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 422-23; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 80-82; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 225.

Table 8.1  
Land Reform in Iran

Stage of Reform	Number of Peasants Receiving Land
[Sharecroppers, before land reform]	[2,100,000]
Phase 1 of reform	753,000
Phase 2 of reform	213,000
Phase 3 of reform	800,000
Others with long-term vaqf leases	172,000
TOTAL receiving land	1,938,000
Source: Hooglund, <i>Land and Revolution</i> , 72 table 4, rounded off.	

... the practical success as measured in terms of actual positive benefits accruing to the peasants as a result of redistribution was virtually nonexistent.... the Iranian land reform was actually a very conservative program which in the long term provided most villagers with few positive advantages.... by 1971 ... the overwhelming majority of villagers were in no better economic situation than they had been prior to the implementation of the program.<sup>25</sup>

The reasons for this include the facts that up to a half of village families were unaffected by the reform, as they had no formal sharecropping agreement with the landowner; the vast majority who did receive land received small amounts of fragmented, poor-quality holdings; and up to one-half of the land was not distributed at all, remaining in the hands of large owners. These are issues of rural class structure which require further examination.

**Rural social structure and the new agricultural mode of production.** Data on the size of holdings after the land reform underscores its problematic impact on the countryside. In effect, then, large absentee ownership was modified, but survived. Peasant sharecroppers became small peasant proprietors, but remained at subsistence levels, as ca. seven hectares was considered the minimum holding required to support a family. Landless peasants remained landless and very poor. Middlemen and middle peasants consolidated their positions and the latter increased in number. A closer look at each of these classes rounds out this interpretation.

Some 45,000 large, mostly absentee landlords remained after the land reform, and as Table 8.2 indicates, 1,350 of them had truly enormous holdings of over 200 hectares. The total land held by

<sup>25</sup> Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, xvi, 78, 115. See also *ibid.*, xv, and Eric J. Hooglund, "Rural Participation in the Revolution," pp. 3-6 in *MERIP Reports*, number 87 (May 1980), 3.

Table 8.2  
Landownership After the Land Reform

Size of Holding	Number of Owners
>200 hectares	1,350
50-200 hectares	44,000
10-50 hectares	150,000-600,000
5-10 hectares	700,000
2-5 hectares	700,000
<2 hectares	1,000,000
0 hectares	700,000-1,400,000

Sources: Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 147, 162-63; Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 23 table IV, and *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 429-30. There are some discrepancies in the two sets of data, especially at the 10-50 hectare level.

such absentee owners was as much as 47 percent of all cultivable land, including the most fertile in Iran. Through legal loopholes and subterfuge landlords remained the largest landowners in 90 percent of all villages, though their number was halved and they were no longer the sole landowners or as politically all-powerful. The top 20 percent of the rural population accounted for 43.6 percent of consumption in 1972/73. Those who left the countryside received shares in state-owned factories worth \$93 million; some diversified into real estate, trade, banking and contracting. As capitalist farmers now employing wage labor the rest did remain economically powerful on their farms, and varieties of paternalistic attitudes continued to be found among them.<sup>26</sup>

A rural middle class also arose of middle peasants (the 150-600,000 owning 10-50 hectares in Table 8.2) and village merchants. The middle peasantry emerged out of the former village headmen and production team leaders who received more land than the ordinary sharecropper. They were able to stay out of debt (often acquiring the land of others), consume more and send children to high school. Another rural middle class group were village shopkeepers, who often doubled as moneylenders, millers and renters of equipment and draft animals. Along with the landlords, these

<sup>26</sup> Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 120-23, 188-9, and *Land and Revolution*, 78-83; Baku, "Oil Revenue," 153; Ashraf, "Iran," 182-83. Hooglund quotes at length one absentee agronomist trained in West Germany, who said of the peasants, among other things: "They just want to produce enough to stay alive and don't care about improving their lot at all. Why, if all the land had been given to them they wouldn't know what to do.... The peasants are lazy and stupid and it will take one hundred years for them to learn how to farm properly": "The Effects of the Land Reform," 123-24.

middle class groups dominated the new rural political institutions such as village councils, cooperative societies and rural courts, further consolidating their positions as the most well-to-do individuals living in the countryside.<sup>27</sup>

The vast majority of the rural population fell into the two far more destitute categories of small peasants and landless laborers. Table 8.2 shows 2,400,000 peasants with less than 10 hectares (71 percent with less than 5 hectares, i.e. below subsistence-level) and 700,000 to 1,400,000 completely landless families. The majority of peasant plots were non-contiguous and often on unirrigated, less fertile land. Another impoverished group living at subsistence level were village service and craftspeople—the barbers, bath attendants, carpenters, blacksmiths and shoemakers. Craftspeople saw their living standard deteriorate as inexpensive manufactured goods began to make their way into the villages by the 1970s. Worse off were the landless rural proletariat, up to 1.4 million individuals (and 7 million people, counting whole families), who lived by working part-time on others' land or migrating to nearby towns and distant cities, where they became part of the urban marginal classes. After land reform they had fewer employment opportunities as large farms were mechanized and small peasants did their own labor. A 1967 survey of agricultural workers in three villages found two-thirds expressing "extensive alienation."<sup>28</sup>

The standard of living of the rural majority would seem almost as bad after the land reform as before (and certainly any gains lagged far behind the more privileged urban sector). Incomes per capita could be as low as \$131 a year for peasants holding 3-10 hectares, and \$70 for those with 0-3 hectares. Rural proletarians made an average of \$1.40 a day for men and 74 cents for women in 1972 (for seasonal work of perhaps 100 days a year). Malnutrition and undernourishment were widespread; Katouzian reports 38 percent of the rural population undernourished in 1972/72 (6.6 million people) and another 4 percent (700,000) severely undernourished. Despite the establishment

<sup>27</sup> Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 131 table 3, 135 table 4, 137 table 5, 152-54, 193-201, and *Land and Revolution*, 88-89, 124ff.; Eric J. Hooglund, "The Khwushnishin Population of Iran," pp. 229-245 in *Iranian Studies*, volume 6 (Autumn 1973), 233.

<sup>28</sup> Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 90-97; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 429-30; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 260; Halliday, *Iran*, 188; Farhad Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution in Iran. The Migrant Poor, Urban Marginality and Politics* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1980), 41, citing Isma'il Ajami's 1967 survey of three villages in Fars.

of rural schools and a Literacy Corps, only 15 percent of the rural population received an education in 1971, and 60 percent of men and 90 percent of women were illiterate in 1975. Ninety-six percent of villages had no electricity in the 1970s.<sup>29</sup>

The political consequences of the land reform were the effective replacement of the all-powerful landlord in the villages by the obtrusive state. This was accomplished through the Literacy Corps, Health Corps, Extension and Development Corps, government organization of village institutions (cooperative societies, credit unions, rural courts), control of prices, and the coercive power of the rural gendarmerie. One peasant of Kirman province told Ann Lambton in the mid-1960s: "... formerly we obeyed the landowners; now we shall obey whoever issues orders to us."<sup>30</sup>

Peasants may have obeyed but there was much resentment, directed at both the state and the landed elite. Some felt less than grateful for the land reform, one telling Hooglund in 1967: "Our fathers worked this land for generations; it belongs to us and we should have it free of all burdens."<sup>31</sup> A young Kurdish peasant expressed the carryover of class antagonism from landlord to government authority when he said:

Yes, we need schools and doctors, but they are just for the rich. I wish I didn't even know doctors existed. Before, we were ignorant, but now we know that pills and shots can help us. But we can't buy them, so we watch our children die from sickness as well as hunger. Before, the elders said that if a child died, it was the will of God (*dast-i khudā*), but now I think that it's the will of the government (*dast-i dowlat*).<sup>32</sup>

Nor did bitter feelings toward landlords or an awareness of class inequalities subside as a result of the reform, as another Kurdish peasant made clear:

What do I really think? Well, things have changed for the better, that is certain. It was bad here.... I'm a poor man, I know, but at least I can feed my family, so I am lucky. Most of the others can't even do that.... why didn't [the *khwushnishin*] get any land? These *āghās* [lords] are still here and they own the best land. Some men have no land at

<sup>29</sup> For income data, see Halliday, *Iran*, 132 table 9, 167; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 42; and Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 129-37, 216. On other indices of living standards, see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 270-72; Halliday, *Iran*, 120; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 447.

<sup>30</sup> Ann K. S. Lambton, *The Persian Land Reform 1962-1966* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 145. This paragraph also draws on Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 204-14, and *Land and Revolution*, 126-35; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 438-39.

<sup>31</sup> A peasant of the Khalkhal district, quoted in Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 54.

<sup>32</sup> A Kurdish peasant of Kuh-i Sanjabi, in a 1968 interview, quoted in Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 137.

all and many others don't have enough on which to grow their families' bread. So what is just about all this?.... the *āghās*, they just prosper to the end (*dam-i marg*).<sup>33</sup>

Passive resistance and covert resentment on the part of the peasantry was apparently widespread in the 1960s and 1970s, signalling the ultimate failure of the political aim of the regime in creating a large class of loyal supporters in the countryside.

**Agricultural performance.** In the absence of any coordinated or comprehensive agricultural development strategy and budget allocations as low as six percent (in 1969), there should be little surprise in finding that overall growth rates in agriculture were extremely disappointing. As the government inflated its production figures by as much as 100 percent, it is also not surprising to find disparities among experts' assessments. These cluster in the 2-3 percent range per year in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, according to Graham (2 percent), Keddie (2-2.5 percent), Motameni (ca. 2.2 percent), Katouzian (2-3 percent) and Seyfollahi (ca. 3 percent), with only Baku's 3.3 percent and Pesaran's 4.4 percent offering a more positive evaluation. When these are measured against a population growth of about 3 percent, one can conclude that agricultural production was virtually stagnant in per capita terms despite land reform, mechanization, the spread of capitalist relations and other changes. The share of agriculture in the GDP fell from 50 percent in the 1940s to 33 percent in 1959, 23 percent in 1969 and 9.2 percent in 1977/78. Production of wheat, barley, rice, tobacco, cotton and other key staples and exports grew slowly over the whole period, all suffering declines at some point or other.<sup>34</sup>

As agriculture grew at 2-3 percent a year, consumption was rising as much as 12 percent annually. This meant shortfalls in production of such necessities as wheat and barley, rice, meat and dairy products. Food imports rose from under \$100 million in 1963 (with the agricultural balance of

<sup>33</sup> A Kurdish peasant of the Mahabad area, in a 1968 interview, quoted in Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 124-25.

<sup>34</sup> On the lack of a plan, see Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 112. On the budget and inflated statistics, see Halliday, *Iran*, 129, 157. Growth estimates are found in Graham, *Iran*, 43; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 167; Motameni, "An Inquiry," 155 table 13; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 256, 304; Seyfollah Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie in Iran, 1962-1978," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University (1982), 256 table 34; Baku, "Oil Revenue," 141 table 21; and Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 505. Share of GDP is discussed by Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 59-60, and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 257 table 13.1. Data on production of specific crops is found in Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 134 table 1; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 201; Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 149 table 4.8; and Baku, "Oil Revenue," 143 table 22.

trade still positive as late as 1968), to \$211 million in 1972, \$1-1.5 billion in 1975 and \$2.6 billion in 1977, equal to about 14 percent of Iran's food needs.<sup>35</sup>

One cause of Iran's agricultural problems was the poor performance of the new agribusinesses and farm corporations. Fourteen huge agribusiness ventures of over 5,000 hectares each were established between 1968 and 1978, mostly located near large dam projects. Investors included the government, private capitalists, international banks such as Chase, Citicorp and Bank of America, and multinationals including Shell, Mitsui, John Deere and Dow Chemical. Despite massive investments in irrigation, tractors and fertilizer they proved for the most part to be business failures, and indeed to be both relatively and absolutely (i.e. regardless of differences in land, water, technology and capital) less productive than medium-sized peasant holdings. This surprising result may be attributed to mismanagement by foreigners ignorant of Iran's climate, use of inappropriate technologies, inefficiencies of size, high overhead costs, exorbitant infrastructural investments, and the leaving of much land fallow. Meanwhile they displaced peasants and used little labor in the job-starved countryside. Some 100 state-run farm corporations with similarly large capital investments also proved less efficient and productive than peasant-owned villages.<sup>36</sup>

Nor could Iran's several million small farmers make up for these failures to feed the whole country. In part this was due to errors in government pricing policy (or a deliberate subsidy to urban consumers) that kept the purchasing price of their crops, especially wheat, below the costs of production. Rather than improving the system of distribution (which accounted for a 30 percent loss of tomatoes and 20 percent in meat), the state paid peasants only about 5.5 percent of the shop price for their products, compared to 44 percent for the wholesalers, 39 percent for the retailers and 11.5

<sup>35</sup> Graham, *Iran*, 43; Halliday, *Iran*, 128; Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie," 195; Behzad Yaghmaian, "Economic Development, Land Reform and Imports Substitution: The Case of Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, Fordham University (1985), 85 table IV.1, 86 table IV.2; Pesaran, "Economic Development," 281 note; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 305; Parviz Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms in Iran: Investment Determinants and Comparative Performance," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, Georgia State University (1980), 59 table 13.

<sup>36</sup> On agribusinesses and farm corporations, see Graham, *Iran*, 117-18; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 84-87; Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie," 243 table 30; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 165-66; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 39 tables 3.1 and 3.2; and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 309-11, who cites the work of Fatemeh Etemad Moghaddam, "The Effects of Farm Size and Management System on Agricultural Production in Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford (1979).

percent for transportation. This led to disincentives to produce for the market, changes to non-staple, non-price controlled crops, or simple desertion of the land, while Iran's food import bill rose ever higher.<sup>37</sup>

Conceptually, the best way to capture the changes and continuity in Iranian agriculture by the 1970s is as a transition from the peasant cropsharing mode of production to capitalist agriculture. The preservation of millions of small-scale producers (now owners rather than sharecroppers) has led some observers to speak of "the system of family production" or "individual petty production" in the countryside,<sup>38</sup> but Iran's peasants were now increasingly enmeshed in a system stamped by market relations in distribution and the use of landless rural labor in production (on the agribusinesses, farm corporations, middle to large farms and at certain times on most "family" plots). The nature of the land reform, and the inadequacies of the large-scale projects may have preserved the small size of most holdings for a time, but the preservation and indeed extension of inequalities, creation and release of a huge army of landless agricultural workers, and spread of commercialized production and distribution all made the new system unmistakably capitalist in mode of production terms.

## II.B. The Tribal Sector

Iran's tribal sector continued to shrink in viability throughout the late shah's reign, the victim of conscious state policies and demographic and political trends generally. Official figures for the number of tribespeople actually migrating (as opposed to the much more numerous settled tribal ethnic groups) have ranged wildly: from nearly two million in the 1940s (during the period of tribal "resurgence") down to an improbable 240,000 in 1956 and the same number in 1966, and then, inexplicably, back to 1.87 million in the 1976 census. Even if the 1956-66 estimates are thrown out, the nomadic tribal population fell absolutely from about 2.5 million in 1900 to less than two million

<sup>37</sup> Graham, *Iran*, 117; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 113-14; Edmund Burke, III and Paul Lubeck, "Explaining Social Movements in Two Oil-Exporting States: Divergent Outcomes in Nigeria and Iran," pp. 643-665 in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, volume 29, number 4 (October 1987), 659 note.

<sup>38</sup> Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 67, 98; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 33; Halliday, *Iran*, 194.

in the 1970s, or in the more revealing relative terms, from 25 percent of the population to about six percent.<sup>39</sup>

The shah reinstated the sedentarization policies of his father, and was possessed of stronger administrative and coercive mechanisms to carry them out. The land reform also eroded tribal holdings by "nationalizing" all pasture land, reducing tribal control and increasing dependence on the state. The few tribes that resisted—the Boir Ahmadis in 1962, the Qashqa'i in 1963-65, Kurdish guerrillas after 1967—were ruthlessly repressed, "treated with a harshness that, in the view of Nāsser Pākdāman (an Iranian political economist), not even the Red Indians in America had suffered."<sup>40</sup>

**Class structure.** Tribal social structure and economy were severely impacted by these developments. Tribal chiefs lost political power and social status as a result of sedentarization and land reform, just as large landlords did. But like the landlords some managed to retain economic power, making themselves and their families into landowners, businessmen, bureaucrats or military officers. Thus, for example, Taimur Bakhtiar became the first head of SAVAK, and Aqa Khan Bakhtiar ran the National Iranian Oil Company. Ordinary tribespeople settled in great numbers due either to government policy or economic hardship. Many became small peasants and landless rural laborers in the countryside, or factory workers, unskilled construction workers or part of the marginal population in the cities. Some, such as the 50-70,000 Shabsavan, managed to remain migratory, and continued to produce pastoral products, as we shall see. Life for most became harder, and data on nutritional standards in the countryside showed particularly high levels of malnourishment in Kurdistan, Khuzistan, Kirman and Bakhtiar, all areas of large tribal settlement. These class and economic changes eroded tribal consciousness to a certain degree: "In short, the horizontal ties of class tended to supplant the vertical sentiments of clan, tribe, sect, and locality."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> For 1900, the 1940s, 1956 and 1966 figures, Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 31-32; for 1976, Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 4, 169 note 44.

<sup>40</sup> Pakdaman's remarks are cited in Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 306. On tribes and the state, I have drawn on Beck, lecture on "Tribes and the State"; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 167-68; Halliday, *Iran*, 214, 226-27; and Hooshang Amirahmadi, "A Theory of Ethnic Collective Movement and its Application to Iran," unpublished manuscript, 34 table 8.

<sup>41</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 531. This paragraph draws on Garthwaite, *Khans and shahs*, 140-41; Beck, "Economic Transformations," 118; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 167-68; and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 272.

**Economic performance and mode of production.** Sedentarization, land reform and demographic decline dislocated Iran's production of meat and dairy products in the 1960s. Livestock breeding declined from 40 percent of agricultural production in the 1960s to 26 percent around 1970, before rising back to 33 percent in 1973-78 as a result of government attempts to introduce large, capital-intensive units for poultry products and sheep. Meanwhile, the number of cattle had declined from 5,400,000 to 5,200,000 between 1955 and 1969 and sheep from 30 million to 28 million between 1960 and 1969. In 1966 only 40 percent of goats and sheep were owned by tribespeople. As production of pastoral goods became more capitalist than pastoral-nomadic, Iran's ability to export non-oil products from meat and hides to wool and finished carpets declined. In mode of production terms, despite the inroads made by capitalist livestock production units, the long-standing pastoral nomadic mode of production continued to exist, only in attenuated form, with a far smaller share of the economy and labor force than previously.<sup>42</sup>

## **II.C. The Capitalist Sector**

Encompassing manufacturing, construction, services, the state bureaucracy and middle class professionals, the capitalist mode of production became the largest mode in the urban sector as well by the 1970s. Having already discussed the state, the focus here will be on the expansion of capitalist industry and the professions, and the classes that made them up.

**Capitalist industrialization.** As under Reza Shah in the 1930s, conscious industrial strategy may have been haphazard—Katouzian concludes there was "no strategy worthy of the name," Halliday quotes one expert to the effect that "the only kind of planning in Iran is what the Shah wants"<sup>43</sup>—but the industrialization process nevertheless followed some discernible patterns. The main emphasis in the 1960s was on import substitution industrialization to provide urban consumers with various goods (clothes, food, cars, appliances) and in the 1970s a deepening of this path to

<sup>42</sup> Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 131, 133, 135 table 2, 271-72; Baku, "Oil Revenue," 143 table 22, 145.

<sup>43</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 277; Halliday, *Iran*, 157.

undertake production of certain basic and intermediate goods such as chemicals, steel and machine tools. Assessments of the success of this effort vary from Issawi's conclusion in 1978 that "Iran now provides a significant part of the intermediate and capital goods it requires, and the proportion should rise steeply during the next few years" to the more pessimistic findings of Pesaran and Yaghmaian, with which I am inclined to agree.<sup>44</sup> A look at rates of growth and available data on specific industries will bear out both the achievements and problems of capitalist industrialization in Iran.

Iran's overall industrial growth rate was an impressive 15 percent annually between 1965 and 1975, and registered 14.6 percent in 1976/77 and 9.4 percent in 1977/78, a year of recession. These rates may have been the highest in the Third World over this period, and were twice or more the average of the developing countries generally. Gross domestic fixed capital formation moreover grew at a high 18.4 percent annual rate for 1963-77. These rates were somewhat deceptive however, in at least two respects: industry's share of GNP at about 18 percent lagged well behind that of services (35 percent) and oil (35 percent) in 1977/78, and manufactured non-oil exports were only 2-3 percent of all exports ca. 1975, comparing very poorly with such countries as India (over 50 percent), Singapore (60 percent) and Mexico (33 percent).<sup>45</sup>

Other aggregate industrial data show a rise in small factories (with 10-49 workers) from less than a thousand in 1953 to more than 7,000 in 1977, with corresponding increases in the numbers of medium-size factories (50-100 workers) from 300 to 830, and large factories of over 500 workers from 19 to 159. (There were, however, over 200,000 small workshops with less than ten workers, showing the persistence of artisanal production.) The number of industrial workers (including those in small shops, construction, transport and utilities as well as manufacturing) reached almost 2.5 million in 1977. Behind high protective tariffs and licensed monopolies, profits of 30-50 percent were common in the 1970s.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 164; Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 507-10; Yaghmaian, "Economic Development," 147-61.

<sup>45</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 138, 148, 161-62; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 184; Pesaran, "Economic Development," 279, 280 table 4; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 257 table 13.1.

<sup>46</sup> Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 22; Halliday, *Iran*, 148, 159; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 26 table 3.3; Fred Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism," pp. 187-207 in *Journal of International Affairs*, volume 36, number 2 (Fall/Winter 1982-83), 194; Keddie, "The Midas Touch," 249-50; Baku, "Oil Revenue," 138 table 20.

Data on output and share of specific industries is provided by Katouzian and shown in Table

8.3.

Table 8.3  
Industrial Production, 1971/72-1975/76

Sector	Output, 1971/72 (in billion rials)	% of Total	Output, 1975/76 (in billion rials)	% of Total
Textiles	19.7	17.8 (1)	28.0	13.5 (2)
Motor vehicles	16.2	14.4 (2)	44.8	21.6 (1)
Sugar	11.1	10.2 (3)	13.2	6.3 (5)
Basic metals	9.8	8.8 (4)	19.5	9.4 (3)
Tobacco products	9.6	8.6 (5)	12.0	5.8 (6)
Home appliances	7.0	6.4 (6)	17.3	8.3 (4)
Vegetable oil	7.0	6.4 (7)	10.7	5.1 (7)
Cement	4.0	3.6 (8)	7.8	3.8 (9)
Radios, TVs, phones	3.8	3.5 (9)	10.0	4.8 (8)
Petrochemicals	3.6	3.2 (10)	5.9	2.8 (10)
Toiletries	3.3	2.9 (11)	5.8	2.8 (11)
Others	15.5	14.0	32.8	15.8
TOTALS	110.8	100.0	207.8	100.0

Source: Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 281 table 14.2, table 14.3.  
"Others" includes the next ten industries, which were, in descending order in 1971/72: shoes, tires, electrical accessories, drugs, paint, leather products, non-alcoholic beverages, alcoholic beverages and glassware.

Textiles remained important, increasing output from 350 million to 533 million meters of cloth between 1965 and 1975, but falling behind motor vehicles in terms of total value of production. Food processing, led by sugar, vegetable oils, beverages and tobacco also continued as an important sector carried over from the past. Assembly-type industries such as autos and electrical appliances became increasingly prominent. Dominated by multinational investors, production of motor vehicles rose from 7,000 units in 1965 to 109,000 in 1975, of TVs from 12,000 to 31,000, of phones from none to 186,000, and of gas ovens from 87,000 to 220,000. Other high-technology, capital-intensive sectors were in production of steel and aluminum (at great cost and with foreign help) whose output increased ten times but still lagged behind demand; petrochemicals, basic chemicals and pharmaceuticals (again, all characterized by foreign technology and licensing); and machine tools in a plant at Arak. Important non-manufacturing sectors included the huge construction industry, the smallish non-oil mining sector, the overextended transportation sector, and banking, dominated by the key

Industrial and Mining Development Bank of Iran, established in 1957 with 40 percent foreign ownership.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the success indicated by the aggregate and sectoral data, Iranian industrialization was plagued by a number of problems. Katouzian notes for example that plants ran at low capacity due to shortages of technicians and managers, crippling bureaucratic restrictions obtained and production costs were high. Halliday lists the lack of skilled labor, inefficiency, limits of the internal market, lack of competition due to too-high tariffs and resulting lack of export potential. Pesaran considers the problems of import-substitution industrialization to have included a concentration of artificially high profits, lack of forward and backward linkages in the economy, discrimination against agriculture due to the overvalued rial, and the brake on employment caused by capital-intensivity. Other difficulties described by Graham were the disastrous overtaxing of infrastructure (ports and roads) during the oil boom which led to great wastage of imports, endemic corruption, and capital flight after 1975 when the state mandated profit-sharing with workers in some industries and initiated an anti-profiteering campaign. These trends resulted in the end of the boom after 1975 and a recession in 1977.<sup>48</sup>

Behind this litany of problems lurked structural weaknesses deriving from the dependent nature of Iran's industrialization process. In this context, and in that of the Third World generally, certain characteristic problems of the import-substitution strategy come to light. The problem of market size has already been mentioned; due to the necessarily limited (even if growing) numbers of the middle and upper classes, there is only a certain amount of production that can be consumed. If, as in Iran, high tariffs and monopoly licensing are used to guarantee profits, then products will not be competitive on the world market, and few manufactured items are exported (high wage bills due to inflation after 1973 compounded this trend). This is a recipe for long-term disaster when oil revenues run out.

<sup>47</sup> In addition to Table 8.3, data on these industries is found in Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 430-31; Issawi, "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 151 table 4.9; Graham, *Iran*, 119-22; and Hushang Moghtader, "The Impact of Increased Oil Revenues on Iran's Economic Development," pp. 241-262 in Kedourie and Haim, editors, *Towards a Modern Iran*, 248 table 7.

<sup>48</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 279; Halliday, *Iran*, 147, 166; Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 507-10; Graham, *Iran*, 88-94.

Furthermore, the modern industrial sector as a whole was grossly dependent on foreign joint ventures, for capital, technology, management and inputs. As we shall see, foreign capital was dominant in autos, appliances, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, plastics and even made inroads in such traditionally local industries as textiles and construction. The key auto and electrical appliance sectors were essentially "screwdriver" industries, merely assembling imported parts and adding very low amounts to the total value of the finished products. Pharmaceutical companies bought most ingredients abroad, down to the packaging materials: "According to an expatriate manager of a large foreign pharmaceutical firm, his factory in Iran was no more than a 'large drug store'."<sup>49</sup> In 1978 pharmaceuticals were 85-100 percent dependent on imported inputs, chemicals 60-100 percent, textiles 80 percent (for machinery), certain food items 70 percent and certain building materials 57 percent.<sup>50</sup>

By the 1970s, the international division of labor was changing so that the Third World became involved in certain areas of production. Multinational companies were willing to help Iran expand into oil refining, petrochemicals, fertilizer, iron, steel and aluminum, because the West would get some of the finished products and would sell Iran the plants, equipment, technology, management and some of the inputs, in addition to having some joint ownership. Meanwhile the West reserved for itself the new high-tech sectors of the world economy and the most advanced agricultural production. So, for example, Iran would make basic chemicals, while the West would manufacture high-quality, special, or finished chemical products. Iran would not have an integrated chemical industry, and its role would be determined by the multinationals. The industries entrusted to Iran, moreover, were environmentally destructive and cost-effective in the energy-intensive Iranian setting. This was the meaning of Iran's attempt to move into the semiperiphery of the world-economy, a subject investigated further in section III. In general, the industrial sector used imported machines to assemble imported parts with imported technology, sometimes in joint ventures, and sold poor quality goods at high, protected prices and repatriated some of the profits out of the country. This was a *dependent*

<sup>49</sup> Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 165, based on V. Nowshirvani and R. Bildner, "Direct Foreign Investment in the Non-Oil Sector of the Iranian Economy," pp. 66-109 in *Iranian Studies*, volume 6, numbers 2-3 (1973), 90.

<sup>50</sup> Erhard Thiemann, "Iran Under the Shah Regime: Model of Dependent Capitalist Industrialization," pp. 88-102 in Günter Barthel, editor, *Iran: From Monarchy to Republic*, 93.

development.<sup>51</sup>

**Classes.** The main urban classes in the capitalist mode of production were the capitalist class (with its state, local and foreign components), the working class, and the intelligentsia, including professionals and students. The state played the dominant role in industrialization in the 1960s, allocating oil revenues, building infrastructure, and coordinating the Iranian bourgeoisie and foreign capital in joint ventures through the grant of loans, licenses and contracts. Its role as employer of a vast military apparatus and civilian bureaucracy has already been examined, as have the investments made on the shah's behalf by the Pahlavi Foundation. In industry, the state's share of ownership dropped from the 1941 level of 50 percent to 17 percent in 1963 after the transfer of shares in state factories as compensation for the expropriation of landed estates. Thus, for example, of 16 large firms employing over 1,000 workers ca. 1964 the state owned four. But as oil revenues grew the state's role in industrial investments increased apace, from 40 percent in the mid-1960s to 60 percent in the 1970s. By virtue of its preponderant role in the expensive new sectors—steel, petrochemicals, natural gas, machinery—the state was to invest \$46.2 billion during the Fifth Plan (1973-78), compared with the private sector's \$23.4 billion. We can thus agree with Halliday's assessment that industrial development between 1953 and 1978 is generally attributable to the state's dominant role.<sup>52</sup>

The private sector certainly played a role in this process, however. Local capitalists in the Pahlavi period had origins as landowners, longstanding urban notable families, older industrialists of the 1930s and 1940s, some ex-bazaari merchants, top civil servants and military officers. Almost all enjoyed some contact with the royal family for to succeed one had to be favored by the court. The main lines in which local capital played a role were light industry, construction and banking. Census data indicate an increase in the number of owners/employers from 68,777 in 1956 to 152,623 in 1966 and 186-220,000 by 1976, but wealth was very concentrated at the top: in 1972 56 families owned

<sup>51</sup> On these issues see Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 168-69; Thiemann, "Iran Under the Shah Regime," 95-99; and F. Fröbel, J. Heinrichs and O. Kreye, *The New International Division of Labor* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>52</sup> On the state's role, see Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 248-49; Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 331-32; Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 162; Halliday, *Iran*, 147-55; and Baku, "Oil Revenue," 89 table 10.

shares in 177 of the 364 largest industrial firms, and 72 families in a further 88 firms. Halliday reports that in 1974 just 45 families controlled 85 percent of firms with turnover of more than ten million rials (\$133,333), while Abrahamian thinks 1,000 families controlled 85 percent of all firms. Ashraf's survey indicates that the top 1.5 percent of the population increased their share of the national income from 29.5 percent in 1960 to 35 percent in 1970. Private sector profits ran at 33.2 percent in 1972-74. Bourgeois attitudes toward the state were as often of resentment and insecurity as of loyalty and affection; toward each other there was considerable factionalism; and toward the workers primarily paternalism, disdain and condescension.<sup>53</sup>

The third partner in this triple alliance was foreign capital, whose role in this period shaped the Iranian economy on a scale beyond the already significant one we have seen from 1850 to 1950. By law, foreigners could only own 49 percent of joint ventures, but could repatriate profits freely. The extent of foreign participation in the Iranian economy has been subject to diverse interpretations. Direct foreign investment outside oil was "not very large" in Keddie's view. It grew from less than \$500,000 a year in 1956 to \$2 million a year in the early 1960s, \$20 million a year in the late 1960s and about \$60 million a year by the late 1970s. Ansary, the minister of the economy, estimated total foreign investment in Iran at the beginning of 1977 at \$5.2 billion (of which Japan accounted for 30 percent, the United States 28 percent, West Germany 8 percent, Switzerland 8 percent, Great Britain 7 percent and France 6 percent). This capital represented something less than four percent of all capital invested in Iran, which is seemingly fairly small. However, it was concentrated in Iran's most important economic sectors: agribusiness, as we have already seen; three out of five large petrochemical concerns; four out of five large chemical plants; 14 out of 18 pharmaceuticals; all of plastics; all of autos; 37 of 42 producers of electrical and non-electrical machinery; and involvement in the steel and aluminum industries. Even older, established sectors such as food-processing,

<sup>53</sup> On private sector capital, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 432; Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie," 232 table 25; Behrang [a collective pseudonym for a group of Iranian and French activists], *Iran: Le maillon faible* (Paris: François Maspero, 1979), 174 table; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 26 table 3.3; "Iran: The New Crisis of American Hegemony," pp. 1-24 in *Monthly Review*, volume 30, number 9 (February 1979), 8, citing Behrouz Montazami and Khosrow Naraghi's article in *Le Monde Diplomatique* (December 1978); Baku, "Oil Revenue," 138 table 20, 174-75; Ashraf, "Iran," 242-55; and Halliday, *Iran*, 208, quoting the *Tehran Economist* (May 22, 1976).

construction and textiles were increasingly supplied by multinationals. Banking also had a large foreign presence. The multinationals tended to be the largest companies in Iran, capital- and technology-intensive, and very profitable. Profit rates of anywhere from 50 to 200 percent (50 in general, 100-200 on occasion) were possible. Inflow of foreign capital changed from 9.5 billion rials (\$126.6 million) in 1962/63 to an outflow of 923.8 billion rials (\$12.3 billion) in 1972/73. These considerations indicate that foreign capital was far from a junior partner with state and local capital in Iran.<sup>54</sup>

It is difficult to form a precise idea of the size of Iran's working class, for the definitions vary from "all wage earners" to "workers in large manufacturing establishments" and data sets vary as well. A major problem is the inclusion of large numbers of artisans and rural craft workers in the "manufacturing" data. The most promising numbers are probably in the two to two and a half million range, or 20-25 percent of Iran's ten million strong labor force. Halliday judges that "In overall terms at least, Iran has one of the larger manufacturing labor forces in the third world."<sup>55</sup> We may include 600-900,000 factory workers in plants with over ten workers, 280,000 in transport and communications, up to one million in the construction sector, 88,000 in oil and mining, and 65,000 in utilities. These figures represent a 100-150 percent increase in the twenty years since 1956 (when the total may be estimated at about one million), with the biggest gains in manufacturing and construction. In 1972, the largest sectors were in clothing (224,000 workers), food-processing (181,000), metal products (108,000), wood and furniture (92,000), transport equipment (75,000), petroleum (38,000), chemicals (37,000) and electrical machinery (34,000), though some of these figures presumably include artisans. The origins of this working class varied by sector; Bayat notes strong rural ties (i.e. recent migrant origins) in the newer and more modern industries (and also in construction), and more second-generation urban labor in the older sectors of textiles and food-processing. Wages

<sup>54</sup> On foreign capital in Iran, see Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms," 166-78, 198-99; Keddie, *Root of Revolution*, 170, 172; Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles," 332; Ali-Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Struggle for Liberation: Socio-Historical Roots to the Islamic Revolution," pp. 1-33 in *RIPEH (The Review of Iranian Political Economy and History)*, volume IV, number 1 (Spring 1980), 15; Thiemann, "Iran Under the Shah Regime," 90, 99 note 4; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 23; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 262 table 13.5, 293 note 5; and Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 162-67.

<sup>55</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 176.

also varied by sector, with the more dynamic ones such as pharmaceuticals (at \$88 a month in 1972) and autos (\$94) higher than textiles (\$72) and food-processing (\$56). Textile workers had made \$25-28 a month in 1960. After the oil boom led to labor shortages and inflation in the 1970s wages rose as much as 300 percent, to over \$200 a month by 1976/77, but these are average figures (there were large differentials among unskilled and skilled workers, foremen and technicians). Some 73 percent of workers were found to be making less than the legal minimum in 1974. Working hours were long, and Bayat has thoroughly documented what he judges as "appalling" conditions of work in all factories—modern, traditional, multinational—problems of fumes, noise, dangerous chemicals, industrial accidents, no enforcement of health and safety standards, lack of insurance benefits and poor medical treatment. The average worker may have been better off than the average peasant (and we will look at urban living standards generally below), but life was still very hard.<sup>56</sup>

Another sector of the working class not included in the figures above is the "service" category. Again problems of conceptualization and data overlap are attached to this group. Aggregate figures range from 1.5 million to 3.4 million people. The higher figure includes 800,000 in the civil service (and probably the army!), as well as many professional and students (whom we will classify as urban middle class, below), merchants (whom we consider part of the petty-commodity sector), as well as some of the employees in transport and utilities already counted above. Nevertheless we may note over 150,000 wage earners in banks, offices and other agencies, 140,000 shop assistants and perhaps several hundred thousand other, non-classified workers. The contribution of the non-state service sector to GNP was as high as 20 percent in 1977 (compared to 16 percent in large-scale manufacturing), but again this includes some bazaar merchants of the petty-commodity mode. When service workers are added to the industrial working class, the working class as a whole rises to over three million individuals, or 30 percent of the economically active population. Women,

<sup>56</sup> On the size of the working class see Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 22, and *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 434; Halliday, *Iran*, 176; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 26; Behrang, *Iran*, 174 table; and Moghtader, "The Impact of Increased Oil Revenue," 248 table 7. On wages: "Iran: The New Crisis of American Hegemony," 9; Ivanov *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 204-5; Halliday, *Iran*, 181 table 18, 189-90; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 283 table 14.4, 284-85; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 55; and Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 28 table 3.4, 29, 30 table 3.5. On origins and working conditions, see Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 33, 66-75.

who comprised a portion of both service and industrial workers, will be discussed in section II.D.<sup>57</sup>

Another key class in the capitalist mode was the intelligentsia—teachers, students, writers, artists and some professionals—all in all, what has been called the educated middle class. The proportion of “professionals, technical and related” workers in the labor force more than doubled from 1.6 percent in 1956 to 3.5 percent in 1972. Chief among these were Iran’s 208,241 teachers and 6,726 professors in 1977. There were also 61,066 engineers, white-collar workers and managers, and 21,500 medical personnel. To these may be added the student population at the secondary level and above, which grew enormously in the 1953-77 period from 14,500 university students to 154,315, 2,538 to 227,507 in technical training and 121,772 to 741,000 in high school, plus more than 80,000 university students abroad—in all, over 1,202,000 students (Katouzian puts secondary students alone at 2.3 million in 1978). Wages and salaries for the members of this group varied: in the oil boom an engineer could make \$2,000 a month, while teachers were always paid much less (the educational budget grew, but not at the pace of the numbers of students and teachers involved). Students and youth moreover faced acute problems; in the 1960s, 13-14 percent of those applying to universities were admitted, while in 1977 60,000 out of 290,000 were accepted. Iran thus had more students abroad than any other country in the world, with a radicalizing effect on the intelligentsia as a whole (discussed below). Meanwhile, 75 percent of all suicides were in the 15-30 year-old group, and the rate of heroin addiction was the second highest in the world, after the United States.<sup>58</sup>

What sort of living standards prevailed in the urban sector? Though relatively better off materially than the countryside, the majority of urban residents suffered from unequal income distribution, inflation and other problems. Table 8.4 presents data on income inequality, based on household expenditures from 1959/60 to 1973/74. The data shows that the top 20 percent of households increased their share of expenditures from 51.79 percent in 1959/60 to 55.56 percent in 1973/74,

<sup>57</sup> Data on the service sector are found in Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 257 table 13.1, 259 table 13.2; Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 136; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 434; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 26 table 3.3; and Moghtader, “The Impact of Increased Oil Revenue,” 250 table 9.

<sup>58</sup> This paragraph draws on Halliday, *Iran*, 16, 222-23; Abrahamian, “Structural Causes,” 22, and *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 431, 434; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 287; Graham, *Iran*, 90; and Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 37-38 table 4.

Table 8.4  
Distribution of Urban Household Expenditures, 1959/60-1973/74  
(percent for each decile)

Deciles	1959/60	1973/74
Poorest 10 percent	1.77	1.37
Second 10 percent	2.96	2.40
Third 10 percent	4.09	3.42
Fourth 10 percent	5.08	4.77
Fifth 10 percent	6.17	5.08
Sixth 10 percent	7.37	6.85
Seventh 10 percent	8.92	9.36
Eighth 10 percent	11.85	11.19
Ninth 10 percent	16.42	17.57
Richest 10 percent	35.37	37.99

Source: M. H. Pesaran, "Income Distribution and Its Major Determinants in Iran," pp. 267-286 in Jane W. Jacqz, editor, *Iran: Past, Present and Future* (New York: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1976), 278 table 51.

while the bottom 40 percent saw their share decline from 13.90 percent to 11.96 percent, and the middle 20 percent also lost ground. Iran's Gini coefficient (a measure of income inequality) in this period worsened from 0.45 to 0.49, and was found by the International Labor Organization in 1969/70 to be "higher than any country in East and Southeast Asia, considerably higher than in Western countries and probably as high or higher than in Latin American countries for which data are available."<sup>59</sup> In 1968, the average mean urban income by decile was 95,979 rials (\$1,267); for the poorest ten percent, it was 12,466 rials (\$165), while for the wealthiest ten percent it was 331,014 rials (\$4,370). Keddie points out these these inequalities undoubtedly grew after 1974 with the dislocations caused by the oil boom.<sup>60</sup>

Inflation likewise took its toll. Spurred in the 1970s by the influx of oil revenues and higher prices for imports (as the West passed its inflation back to the Middle East), it accelerated after 1972, as Table 8.5 shows. While for 1963-67 retail prices had risen only an average of 1.5 percent annually, the rate crept upwards to 3.7 percent a year for 1968-72 and then surged to 15.7 percent

<sup>59</sup> Pesaran, "Economic Development," 283, quoting the International Labor Organization, *Employment and Income Policies for Iran* (Geneva: International Labor Office, 1973), appendix C, 6.

<sup>60</sup> Keddie, "The Midas Touch," 257. Data are in Jabbari, "Economic Factors," 191 table 9.

Table 8.5  
Consumer Price Index, 1952-1979  
(CPI as percentage of 1974 = 100)

Year	CPI	%	Year	CPI	%
1952	32.8	6.8	1966	64.5	0.8
1953	35.8	9.1	1967	65.1	0.9
1954	41.5	15.9	1968	66.1	0.9
1955	42.2	1.7	1969	68.4	3.5
1956	45.9	8.8	1970	69.5	1.6
1957	48.0	4.6	1971	73.3	5.5
1958	48.5	1.0	1972	77.9	6.3
1959	54.8	13.0	1973	86.6	11.2
1960	59.1	7.8	1974	100.0	15.5
1961	60.0	1.5	1975	109.9	9.9
1962	60.6	1.0	1976	128.1	16.6
1963	61.2	1.0	1977	160.2	25.1
1964	63.9	4.4	1978	176.2	10.0
1965	64.0	0.2	1979	196.3	11.4

Source: Dadkhah, "The Inflationary Process," 389 table 1. Percent increases calculated by me.

annually for 1973-77 during the boom. The effect was to erode wage gains and make both housing and food prohibitively expensive in the cities for the working and middle classes. Already in 1972 food expenses consumed 43.6 percent of the average urban income of \$122 a month, while rents rose 15 times between 1960 and 1975, including 200 percent in 1974/75 and 100 percent in 1975/76. The number of urban families living in one room increased from 36 percent in 1967 to 43 percent in 1977.<sup>61</sup>

Other indices of living standards further lay bare the mixed blessing of dependent development. Katouzian found 64 percent of the urban population undernourished in 1972/73 (25 percent severely), a higher rate than in the countryside (at 42 percent). Health statistics record the rises in hospital beds, clinics, doctors and nurses, but in 1977, "Iran still had one of the worst doctor-patient ratios, one of the highest child mortality rates, and one of the lowest hospital-bed-to-population ratios in the whole of the Middle East."<sup>62</sup> Urban infant mortality in the first year of life was 80 per 1,000 live

<sup>61</sup> On prices, see Graham, *Iran*, 85-87; Pesaran, "Economic development," 280 table 6; "Iran: The New Crisis of American Hegemony," 9; Halliday, *Iran*, 190; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 447.

<sup>62</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 446-47. This paragraph also draws on *ibid.*, 431; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 271-72; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 254, 297; Jabbari, "Economic Fac-

births in 1974, down from 180 in 1963. Life expectancy had been just 41 years in 1962; in the 1970s it reached 51 (both infant mortality and life expectancy were quite similar to India's). While the rate of illiteracy had officially fallen from 85 percent in 1956 to 65-70 percent in 1977, the number of illiterates rose from 13 million in 1963 to 15 million in 1977, and Iran still had a higher illiteracy rate than India. These data, taken together, show some improvement in urban living standards, but also suggest the widespread deprivation and suffering that existed in 1977.

**Issues of consciousness: state and class relations.** Neither the working class nor the intelligentsia gave much support to the regime in the 1970s. The state tried to control the former with SAVAK-administered trade unions, of which there were over a thousand in 1978, their organization on a factory-wide basis hinting at their aim of social control at the work place. In a few plants, workers were able to use these company unions to struggle for their own rights. Nor did the 1975 workers' share program in industry affect many workers—only 45,000 were covered in 1976. It was in effect a forced savings plan that held little attraction for the working class, "predominantly [a] symbolic exercise."<sup>63</sup>

In terms of religious and political cultures, Kazemi's 1975 survey of workers at several factories suggested that recent migrants had little knowledge of the formal political system, whereas those who had been in the factories longer, both men and women, were more literate and more aware of issues of class. This bears out Ashraf's 1969 survey in which workers located themselves between the middle class and lumpenproletariat. Bayat has argued that class culture is limited by illiteracy among workers, the attendant lack of political education, the non-existence of associations outside the home either at work or in the community. He notes that few factory workers spend time in coffee houses (this is the preserve of new migrants/construction workers, and the bazaar classes). This left the mosque and *hayat* circles (groups of friends who gathered on religious occasions) as the main locus of association among workers outside the factory, a circumstance that would facilitate ulama leadership in the 1978 events.<sup>64</sup>

tors," 208 appendix A; and Halliday, *Iran*, 13, 164.

<sup>63</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 196. See also *ibid.*, 202-4, and Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 60-61.

<sup>64</sup> Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 97-102; Ashraf, "Iran," 345; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 48-51.

But workers also engaged in militant activities of their own. Strikes, which had declined from 79 in 1953 to seven in 1954 and three from 1955 to 1957, resumed in the 1960s and 1970s despite their illegality. There were 20 from 1957 to 1961, some of which ended in bloodshed. Other strike waves occurred in 1971 and 1974-76, involving textile, bus and pipeline workers, coal miners, chemical, auto and utility workers. Most were over economic issues, some ending with concessions, many with arrests and police violence. These actions set the stage for the political strikes in 1978-79.<sup>65</sup>

The intelligentsia, too, was not won over to the regime. Pahlavi-style modernization offered new material opportunities to the secular, educated middle classes but constrained intellectuals politically. Independent professional associations were dismantled after 1953 and only government-organized ones were permitted. Workers, actors and artists nevertheless did organize themselves in such groups as the Writers' Guild of about 80 intellectuals who protested censorship (and were suppressed in 1970). Teachers joined workers in strikes, as in May 1971 when the army killed one and wounded many in Tehran. Students were particularly active. Despite coming from middle and upper class backgrounds at the university level (with more lower-middle and middle class youth making it to high school), students engaged in militant protests in 1960-63, 1969-70 and 1975 for both educational reforms and against the Pahlavi regime generally. Students abroad were often left-wing in view, and able to organize more freely. The intelligentsia, then, joined the working class as a major social class with grievances against the state by the 1970s.<sup>66</sup>

#### II.D. The Petty-Commodity Mode of Production

As the capitalist mode of production expanded, the bazaar-based petty-commodity mode contracted somewhat, but it persisted in Pahlavi Iran. Absolute urban growth afforded it a margin of existence, as did its own internal dynamics and ability to find and maintain niches of production and distribution. Here we will consider the economic experiences and political cultures of artisans,

<sup>65</sup> On strikes, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 420, 422; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 206-11, 300-305; Baku, "Oil Revenue," 82-84; and Halliday, *Iran*, 206-7.

<sup>66</sup> On the intelligentsia, see Halliday, *Iran*, 224-25; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 208, 211, 305-9; and Katozian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 289.

merchants and rural craftspeople in the 1953-77 period.

**Artisans and craft production.** Small-scale "factories," workshops and handicraft establishments continued to operate in the 1960s and 1970s despite intense competition from local and imported manufactures. Just how numerous this sector was is difficult to discern for the usual reasons. Of 2.5 million "industrial workers" in 1977, 65-72 percent, or 1.7-1.8 million, labored in small units employing less than ten workers. Bayat notes the existence of 1.1 million non-agricultural self-employed workers, 602,000 small-scale industrial workers (333,000 urban and 269,000 rural), and 430,000 non-agricultural family workers—a large portion of these were merchants, artisans and rural craftspeople. Of 250,000 manufacturing establishments, 244,000 employed less than ten workers. Many of these were artisanal urban workshops, and many were rural carpet-weaving sites. Katouzian calculates that this sector accounted for 35 percent of total industrial output and 28 percent of non-oil exports (compared with 57 percent and 21 percent respectively for modern industry). A rough estimate is that 10-20 percent of those employed in the manufacturing sector were "self-employed," meaning there may have been 250-500,000 artisans. Behrang's analysis of census data suggests a substantial rise in the number of "artisans" (seemingly including the 50 percent or more who were rural carpet-makers) from 350,777 in 1956 (6.2 percent of the workforce) to 536,318 in 1966 (8.0 percent) and 1,001,817 (11.5 percent) in 1976. Jazani's list of artisanal activities enumerates "bricklaying, tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, blacksmithing, printing, carpet weaving, small-scale weaving and spinning"; to this list we may add bakers and confectioners, metal workers of all kinds and a host of other long-standing crafts.<sup>67</sup>

Against these growth trends there was countervailing pressure from the capitalist mode of production. In 1972, 191,000 small workshops with an average of three workers each employed 65 percent of industrial workers but produced only 35.5 percent of gross value added per worker, a sign of their labor-intensivity and limited application of machinery. Bayat calculates that in 1976 such

<sup>67</sup> Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 126. For data on artisans, see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 281, 283, 325; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 118; Halliday, *Iran*, 159, 162 table 15, 182; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 25, 26 table 3.3, 31 table 3.6; and Behrang, *Iran*, 174 table.

workshops employed only 36 percent of manufacturing workers, creating 22.8 percent of value added, both suggesting aggregate declines. Data on specific groups show the number of bakers, for example, declining from 17,500 in 1966 to 12,700 in 1976 as Western-processed bread gained a market, and shoemakers from 17,100 in 1966 to 3,200 in 1976. Leatherworkers also lost market share and jobs, Pepsi put local lemonade workshops out of business. The labor process remained much as it had been; within workshops, "the guild elders were able to turn the clock back to the 1920s and reassert their power over the many thousand shop assistants, handicraftsmen, workshop employees, and small peddlers working in the urban bazaars."<sup>68</sup> Journeymen and apprentices were poorly paid, with little job security, insurance benefits, or chances to organize. Paternalistic relations with employers were the norm.

Rural craft workers may also be considered part of the petty-commodity sector, especially by virtue of the craft nature of their skills, even if, more than urban artisans, some of them were exploited in capitalist relations as well. In 1966 rural craft workers were enumerated at 1.2 million, 17 percent of Iran's labor force. Many of these were in carpet weaving of a cottage-industry type, and handmade cloth textiles. There were 128,937 carpet weavers according to the 1956 census; estimates for the 1970s put the number at 300-450,000, with 716,000 workers in textiles (including modern factories) and carpets in 49,577 establishments—14 employees per establishment—in 1972. Carpet weaving continued to expand in the Kirman area in the 1960s, especially in the countryside, where urban-based landlords and merchants controlled rural labor (quite often women and young girls) in a system that Dillon has termed "carpet capitalism." But the highly skilled work was certainly a craft, and the owners of the finished carpets were often bazaar merchants, making the sector in part a subsector of the petty-commodity mode of production as well. Total carpet production was worth ten billion rials (\$132 million) around 1970, with carpets worth 5.76 billion rials exported in 1972/73, about 20 percent of Iran's non-oil exports. Output declined some 44 percent between 1971/72 and 1976/77, however, and another 13 percent in 1977/78, due to migration of the labor

<sup>68</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 433. This paragraph draws on Baku, "Oil Revenue," 121 table 18, 133-34; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 32, 54-55; Behrang, *Iran*, 199; and Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 82.

force to the cities and competition from machine-made carpets. This reflected the terrible working conditions in rural carpet workshops—low pay, long hours, child labor and unhealthy conditions (often dark and poorly ventilated). In addition to the carpet and textile rural craft workers, there were the village blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, shoemakers and other craft and service people already discussed under the agricultural economy. Village tools, for example, still accounted for six percent of domestic capital formation in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>69</sup>

**Merchants and trade.** These craftspeople were joined in the bazaars by a generally more well-to-do group, the merchant class. If we take the figure 1.1 million "petty-entrepreneurs" as only partly referring to this group, and Abrahamian's 250,000 as too low, the figure of 500-650,000 suggested by Jazani and Moghtader may be about right, representing around eight percent of the labor force. A partial census of 1965 indicated that 75 percent of retail outlets were run by single individuals, acting independently and renting their premises. As for centuries the bazaar was stratified into a few large merchants, numerous small and medium shopkeepers and a great many shop assistants, errand boys, street vendors and the like. Artisans and shopkeepers who lacked the collateral to get bank loans kept bazaar moneylenders in business at their 25-100 percent interest rates. Village shopkeepers and itinerant peddlers also brought the urban bazaar to the countryside, perhaps more than ever before. Moghadam's view that the bazaaris "prospered during the period of capitalist development" can be supported by such facts as their control of three-quarters of wholesaling, two-thirds of retail trade and important sources of foreign credit, but on the other hand they now handled only 30 percent of all imports and 15 percent of private sector credit. One rough index of their decline due to the rise of chain outlets and modern shopping areas is the fall in the share of "domestic trade" in the GDP from 9.4 percent in 1963/64 to 5.7 percent in 1977/78. It would be more accurate to say that bazaar merchants continued to exist, rather than prospering, especially relative to the capitalist sector.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 162 table 15, 185; Rey, "Persia in Perspective-2," 37; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 239-40, 291; Moghtader, "The Impact of Increased Oil Revenue," 248 table 7; Dillon, "Carpet Capitalism"; Baku, "Oil Revenue," 132-33; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 143.

<sup>70</sup> On merchants, see Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 31 table 3.6; Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 24, and *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 433; Moghtader, "The Impact of Increased Oil Revenue," 250 table 9; Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 136; Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 160; Keddie, "The Midas

**Relations with the state and issues of consciousness.** Bazaar and state developed definite antagonisms during this whole period. The bazaars had attempted to protest both the 1953 coup and the 1954 oil deal; accordingly, the government tried to regulate their membership, taxes and representation with legislation in 1957-58 and 1971. After 1975 a new onslaught began when the Rastakhiz Party dissolved the guilds and set up its own guilds under a chamber of commerce in each city often run by a large non-bazaar businessman. The municipal government of Tehran announced plans for an eight-lane highway to pass right through the bazaar, a type of urban "renewal" that was carried out around the bazaar/shrine complex in Mashhad. A vigorous "anti-profiteering campaign" was also launched which resulted in the fining of 200,000 shopkeepers, exile of 23,000 and jailing of 8,000 for two months to five years.<sup>71</sup>

These measures drew the classes of the petty-commodity mode of production together. As one shopkeeper told an American reporter: "...if we let him, the Shah will destroy us. The banks are taking over. The big stores are taking away our livelihoods. And the government will flatten our bazaars to make space for state offices."<sup>72</sup> Merchants realized that their common enemy was the state and large-scale capitalist businessmen. SAVAK had difficulty infiltrating the bazaar since merchants, craftspeople and apprentices were generally known to each other and newcomers were scrutinized by guild members as to their family and professional background. Information networks existed through religious circles and the local mosque. Social cohesion was maintained through such practices as bulk purchasing, mutual support and independent credit systems, as for example among the green grocers of the Daryan district in Azarbaijan. Thus, more than sharp resentment between classes in the bazaar, the various groups tended to feel a solidarity with each other. Artisans, merchants and ulama would form a core constituency of the reemerging populist alliance by the late

Touch," 249; Val Moghadam, "Socialism or Anti-Imperialism? The Left and Revolution in Iran," pp. 5-28 in *New Left Review*, number 166 (November/December 1987), 13; Graham, *Iran*, 221; and Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 505.

<sup>71</sup> Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 24-25, and *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 443; Floor, "The Guilds in Iran," 110-11, 115; Halliday, *Iran*, 220.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted by J. Kendell, "Iran's Students and Merchants Form an Unlikely Alliance," *New York Times* (November 7, 1979), as cited by Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 444. This paragraph also draws on Davoud Ghandchi-Tehrani, "Bazaaris and Clergy: Socio-Economic Origins of Radicalism and Revolution in Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, City University of New York (1982), 103-4, 119-20, 158; and Floor, "The Guilds in Iran," 114.

1970s.

## **II.E. Mixed Groups and Classes**

The concept of mixed (or split) groups and classes has been used in this study to deal with social collectivities that either have more than one class position (such as the ulama) or are locatable in more than one mode of production (the urban underclasses and intelligentsia) or both (women and religious minorities). By the reign of Muhammad Reza Shah the intelligentsia had become solidly entrenched in the capitalist mode of production as an intermediate dominated class and were thus discussed above. The ulama, as we shall see, were still definitely split, in both senses, as were women and minorities. Urban marginals remained a mixed class, but were moving closer to the capitalist mode of production. Here we will examine the material circumstances and evidence on the political cultures of these several mixed groups and classes.

**The ulama.** This key social group maintained a strong presence in the changing Iranian social structure despite pressures on it from the state and economy. Halliday puts the number of ulama—always a subjective, loosely defined category—at 180,000; Abrahamian at 90,000 plus “an unknown number of low-ranking preachers, teachers, prayer leaders, and religious procession leaders.”<sup>73</sup> In their upper ranks they included about 50 ayatullahs (a distinction which had evolved in the course of the twentieth century to designate the most widely respected and followed ulama) and below them some 5,000 *hojjat al-islams* (a title meaning “proof of Islam”). The number of religious students aspiring to these ranks grew from a low of 500 in 1946 to 6,000 at the main seminary of Qum in 1962 and to 11,000 in the 1970s. There were an estimated 80,000 mosques throughout Iran, plus countless shrines on which religious devotion was focussed, and ulama services were offered. Despite massive government encroachment on the social services traditionally provided by the ulama, efforts were made by them to staff hospitals, libraries, lecture halls and welfare institutions that delivered such things as rent supplements and health care. Income was generated by assets which

<sup>73</sup> Abrahamian, “Structural Causes,” 24; Halliday, *Iran*, 19.

included the remaining vaqf properties (some 40,000 in 1965 ranging in size from whole villages to small ploughlands scattered around the country) and the payment of the religious taxes of zakat and khums, in large measure by bazaar merchants who were said to pay more taxes to the ulama than to the state. The seminary at Qum operated on a \$5 million annual budget; on one occasion pilgrims to Iraq in 1976 are said to have brought gifts to Khomeini worth over \$10 million, for distribution to the ulama and their programs back in Iran. It is thus possible to argue, as Moghadam and Abrahamian do, that the expanding economy of the 1960s and 1970s favored the ulama as a whole with a measure of economic prosperity.<sup>74</sup>

Economic advance was not however accompanied by a political opening. State-ulama relations passed from a period of acquiescence and accommodation in the 1950s to the 1960-63 protests to considerable repression by the 1970s. The royalist ayatollah Bihbihani and the quietist supreme religious authority Burujirdi provided important support for the shah's reassertion of control in the 1953-58 period by allowing unpopular measures on the foreign policy level such as the 1954 oil deal and the 1955 Baghdad Pact alliance in exchange for government support of religious educational institutions and tacit acquiescence in anti-Baha'i campaigns in 1955. Conservative ulama such as the Imam Jom'eh of Tehran occupied the main government-appointed religious posts. Even Burujirdi and Bihbihani however were opposed to land reform in 1959-60, and Burujirdi's death in 1961 and the events culminating in the 1963 uprising projected a new religious leadership onto the national scene ranging from the liberal constitutionalist Ayatollah Kazim Shariatmadari to the implacable oppositionist Ayatollah Khomeini. A new generation of ulama emerged in the 1970s with fewer ties to the old elites—land reform had cut some links between high ulama and the landed class, while the seminary system modernized itself under the impact of the challenge from state educational institutions. The state struck at ulama power directly and indirectly, promoting the shah as a progressive spiritual leader and denouncing the ulama as medieval reactionaries, scrapping the Islamic and solar

<sup>74</sup> Moghadam, "Socialism or Anti-Imperialism?" 13, and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 433. This paragraph also draws on Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 37, 96-97; Algar, 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Halliday, *Iran*, 19, 218-19; and Hooglund, "The Effects of the Land Reform," 127.

Iranian calendars in favor of a monarchic calendar making it the year 2535, sending a "religious corps" into the countryside to teach "true Islam" to the peasantry, closing religious publishing houses, taking control of *vaqfs*, disbanding religious student organizations, and using the new Family Law to raise the legal age for marriage and give women more rights in marriage, in contravention of the Islamic *Shari'a*. The state also launched a frontal assault through direct repression, including arrests, exile and torture. In 1970 the mujtahid Ayatullah Muhammad Reza Sa'idi was tortured to death: "This execution sent shock waves through the Shi'a religious community, which began to increase its quiet criticism of the ruling regime, which was increasingly presented in the mosques as repressive, corrupt, and anti-islamic."<sup>75</sup> In 1975 prominent ayatullahs such as Beheshti, Montazeri, Qumi, Shirazi, Zanjani and other lesser-rank ulama were arrested. Despite government attempts at repression it was impossible to effectively surveil and control 90,000 ulama (as opposed to only a few hundred left-wing guerrillas).

This was all the more so since the ulama were widely perceived as the custodians of Islamic religious sentiment and political culture. They played roles in a myriad of religious rituals from funeral processions to Islamic holy days that allowed communication and political activities to radiate throughout society. Mosque services, prayer meetings and welfare functions cemented the ties between the ulama and bazaar merchants, artisans, and urban marginals, while religious lay preachers such as Mehdi Bazargan and above all 'Ali Shari'ati built bridges to the more secularized middle classes and intelligentsia. The activist, mobilizing political culture that resulted will be explored in Chapter Nine.

**Migrants and urban marginals.** To the longstanding urban poor and marginal population was added a vast new group of migrants from the countryside in the 1960s and 1970s. The tide of landless peasants pouring into the cities in search of work rose from around 30,000 a year in the 1930s and 130,000 annually from 1941 to 1956, to 250,000 a year for 1957-66 and 330,000 a year between

<sup>75</sup> James A. Bill, "Power and Religion in Revolutionary Iran," pp. 22-47 in *Middle East Journal*, volume 36, number 1 (Winter 1982), 24-25. This paragraph also draws on Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 72-90; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 421, 444-45; Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, 156; and Burke and Lubeck, "Explaining Social Movements," 661.

1967 and 1976. All in all this made for something on the order of three million migrants in the cities by the late 1970s. About one million of these found unskilled work in the construction sector (and were thus part of the working class), but 900,000 people were unemployed in 1977/78, about ten percent of the working population. Others joined the ongoing urban marginal population as peddlers, street vendors, casual laborers, porters, office tea boys and domestic servants, or were forced to live on the fringes of marginal society as prostitutes, scavengers, drug dealers (and addicts), thieves and beggars—Jazani provides some rough estimates suggesting that there were 10,000 professional prostitutes, 30-50,000 part-time prostitutes, 50,000 smugglers (especially of drugs) and 50,000 “professional hooligans, louts and tramps who made a living through extortion, begging, etc.”<sup>76</sup>

A survey of migrants in 1977 by Kazemi showed that 85 percent left their villages due to job or income dissatisfaction, 66 percent were literate (compared with 20 percent of all villagers), three-quarters had gone straight to Tehran, most migrated with their families (these last two trends differ from the Latin American case), and most had friends or relatives in Tehran. Once in the city their lives for the most part paralleled the hard lot of the marginal population as a whole. A high percentage (Hemmasi found it to be 76 percent) remained unemployed. Those who found work were very poorly paid: one 1966 survey of a low-income settlement found average wages of \$9 a month for the head of household; in 1969 46 percent of Tehran's employed population earned under \$50 a month. Incomes rose during the oil boom, but remained at subsistence levels. Nutrition was very poor: Kazemi describes a typical diet of bread and tea for breakfast, bread and fruit for lunch in the summer and bread and cheese in the winter, and a supper of soup. An Iranian acquaintance once told me of a trip to the poor sections of south Tehran where he saw women outside a slaughterhouse using pails to gather the blood and rejected parts that were running through the gutters. It is true, as Hooglund points out, that migrants were used to living in their villages without such basic services as electricity, sewage and piped water, and did have some access in cities to education, health and recreation facilities. They lived, however, in brick kilns, on construction sites, in tents, shacks or

<sup>76</sup> Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 142; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 32, 33 table 3.7; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 259; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 118, 168-69 note 44.

hovels, and descriptions of squatter settlements by Katouzian and Kazemi paint a grim portrait of marginals' living standards.<sup>77</sup>

Urban marginals were not generally active in "politics" as they were too busy trying to make ends meet. Squatters almost never voted and had a low awareness of national politics. Most migrants had no expectation that the government could be made to respond to their needs, and indeed, they had to be concerned about being forcibly evicted by the state, especially in 1977 and 1978. Some fashioned informal networks of mutual assistance among friends, relatives or acquaintances from the same point of origin. Hamid Nava'i, a squatter head of household in Tehran, told Kazemi "At least here there are no bosses or servants, wealthy or beggar. We all consider one another human beings and have respect for everyone, especially for old men and women."<sup>78</sup> Religion also played a solidifying role, indeed, more so than in the villages left behind. This occurred in the mosques, at shrines and among circles of friends, called *hayats*. One young squatter told Kazemi that "Nothing brings us together more than the love for Imam Husayn. My personal view is that these *hay'ats* have a positive aspect in uniting us and keeping us informed about each other's affairs."<sup>79</sup> Young migrants were perhaps more materialistic, worldly and education-oriented than their parents; they also gravitated toward a more activist, politically-tinged religion. Class-based resentment toward the government, local elite and foreigners was finding increasing expression in the 1970s: "As early as 1971 a cautious observer of Iran remarked that, on walking through the streets of the southern, poorer part of Tehran, he encountered 'more expressed hatred than I have ever seen before' from 'people who watch the cars of those people who are doing well'."<sup>80</sup> In 1978, on the eve of the revolution, a squatter of Virdabad noted "There is nothing they can do if we are united. As lower classes we must have solidarity. Otherwise, no one will care about our problems. After all, doesn't the Shah's family depend only on the well-to-do?"<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 44, 48, 49 tables 4.2 and 4.3, 50-51, 54-55, 120-32; Mohammad Hemmasi, *Migration in Iran: A Quantitative Approach* (Tehran: Pahlavi University Publications, 1974), 49; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 115, 169 note 46; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 274-75.

<sup>78</sup> Hamid Nava'i is quoted in Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 125.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 63.

<sup>80</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 287, quoting Richard Cottam.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Chirikha-yi Fada'i-yi Khalk-i Iran, *Guzarishat-i az Mubarizat-i Daliranah-yi Mardum-i Kharij az Mahdudih* [Reports from the Courageous Struggle of the Marginalized Population] (Tehran, 1357/1978), 119, as cit-

**Women, religious minorities.** Women in general made identifiable advances in this period, as an almost unintended, or at least peripheral, consequence of Pahlavi modernization. As mentioned above, the 1967 family law gave them more rights in marriage and at work. In education, the number of women receiving higher education rose from 5,000 in 1966 to 74,000 in 1977, with the proportion of women teaching in kindergartens at almost 100 percent, in elementary schools 54 percent and in secondary schools 30 percent. Politically, representation was limited, as independent groups were merged into Princess Ashraf's Iranian Women's Organization. In 1974 there were three women in the cabinet, four in the senate and 17 in the majlis.<sup>82</sup>

In the labor force participation increased as a function of new opportunities and economic necessity. In 1972, 1.4 million women were officially working in Iran—64 percent of them in industry, 22 percent in services and 11 percent in agriculture. This was 13 percent of all women over age 12 (compared with 68 percent of all men of this age). Indeed many more women than this were actually working in the countryside: 70 percent of all cloth weavers and 72 percent of carpet-weavers were women. For urban women, the Third World average is about 25 percent in the work force, while for the Middle East it is five percent (3.1 percent in Egypt, two percent in Algeria, less than one percent in Saudi Arabia). In Tehran it was 11 percent in 1971 and rising. Professional women numbered 200,000 in 1971 (45 percent in teaching, 44 percent in clerical and administrative work, 11 percent in the medical field). But the vast majority were in industry and service occupations where they received the lowest wages and had difficult working conditions. In factories there was widespread sexual abuse by foremen; so much so "that the girls deny their working in the factories, since they would be called "factory girls"."<sup>83</sup> Patriarchy and sexism continued to pervade Iranian society, setting real limits on amelioration of the condition of women as a whole.

ed by Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 89. This paragraph also draws on Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 535; Hooglund, "Rural Participation in the Revolution," 5; and Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 61-93.

<sup>82</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 434, 444-45; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 179; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 256.

<sup>83</sup> S. Sanavandi, "Sharayit-i Iqtisadi va Ijtima'i Zanan-i Kargar dar Iran" ["The Socio-Economic Condition of Women Workers in Iran"], B.A. thesis, Tehran University (1974), 63, quoted in Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 56. Data in this paragraph are drawn from Halliday, *Iran*, 191-92. For a scathing indictment of patriarchy and sexism in Iranian society, see Baraheni's chapter on "Masculine History," pp. 19-84 in his *The Crowned Cannibals*.

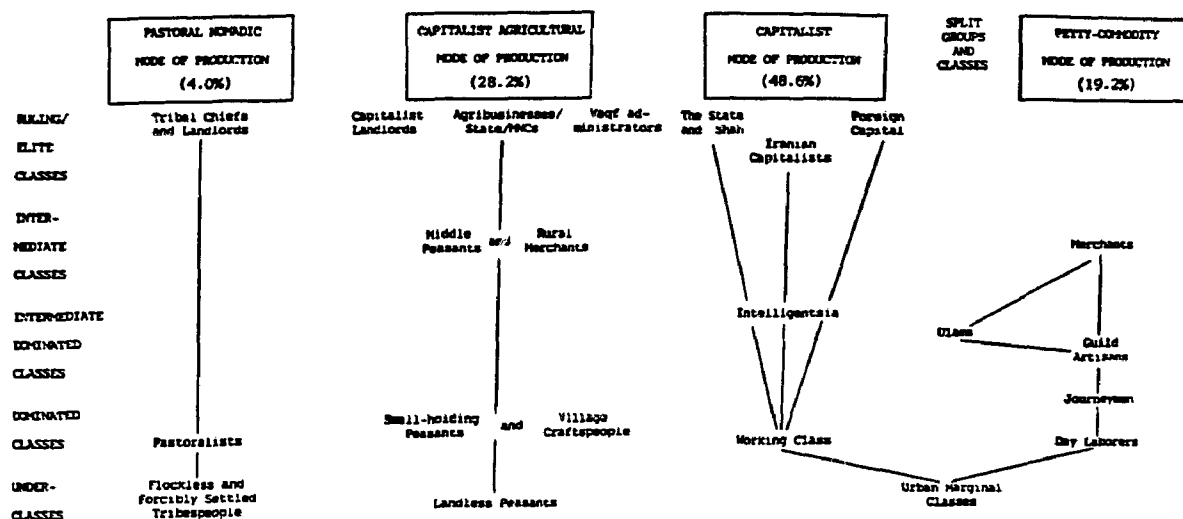
The situation of Iran's religious minorities was slowly evolving in a positive direction as well, it seems (although I have not seen a great deal of data about them in the major secondary sources consulted on this period—*perhaps* a sign of the declining significance of religious orientation and their assimilation into Iranian society). The 1966 census found a Jewish community of 61,000 (0.22 percent of total population) and an even smaller Zoroastrian one of 20,000 (0.07 percent). Each minority continued to have its own elite, middle and lower classes, cutting across social structure, as did women. A Japanese report of 1965 found that Armenian Christians had about ten percent of Tehran's textile trade in hand, and Jewish merchants about 30 percent. Abrahamian observes that the presence of a few Jews, Baha'is and Freemasons "provided fuel for rumors often heard in the bazaars that the whole upper class represented an international conspiracy hatched by Zionists, Baha'is centered in Haifa, and British imperialists through the Freemason Lodge in London."<sup>84</sup> This sort of attitude, particularly common among bazaar merchants, is ample evidence that prejudicial sentiments persisted in Iran. The Baha'is were especially vulnerable to intimidation and attacks by Muslims who regarded them as heretics. Such progress as there was, therefore, was a slow and uncertain process.

## II.F. Modes of Production and Dependent Development

This whole section on economic development can be conceptualized in modes of production terms in Diagram 8.1 (which should be compared with Diagram 6.2 in Chapter Six on the Iranian social formation in 1941). One of the most striking changes over three decades is the qualitative transformation of the peasant crop-sharing mode of production into a capitalist agricultural sector with the attendant transformation of peasant sharecroppers into small-holding peasants, and landlords into capitalists and agribusiness corporations with state and multinational participation. Secondly, the quantitative shifts among the modes of production are quite dramatic in terms of the proportion of the population involved in each (and behind that, their contribution to GNP). Here we register the

<sup>84</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 432. For census data and the 1965 Japanese report, see Issawi, *EIII*, 59, 62, 64.

Diagram 8.1: The Iranian Social Formation in 1977



decline of the pastoral nomadic mode from 7 to 4 percent and of settled agriculture from 69.5 to just 28.2 percent, with the petty-commodity sector rising somewhat from 13.5 to 19.2 percent and the urban capitalist sector growing enormously from 10 to 48.6 percent.<sup>85</sup> The extent to which the capitalist mode of production had become preponderant by 1977 is seen by the total of 76.8 percent in the agricultural and urban capitalist sectors, versus 23.2 percent in the older pastoral nomadic and petty-commodity modes. The latter figure, primarily of bazaar-based merchants, artisans and ulama is not however insignificant, especially as a proportion of the urban population, the geographical site where most Iranian social movements have occurred.

Finally, this section on the economy has provided a basis for evaluating the dependent nature of this capitalist development process. We have seen Iran's great dependence on oil revenues to run the state and economy, the key role played by multinationals in both industry and agriculture, the negative aspects of this kind of industrialization (measured by income inequality, inflation,

<sup>85</sup> These are very rough percentages based on somewhat intractable data. They are arrived at as follows: Katozian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 259 table 13.2, puts the total agricultural sector at 32.2 percent (3.2 million out of 9.93 million in the labor force). If there were 400,000 nomadic families (a total population of 2 million people) then the pastoral nomadic sector accounted for 4.0 percent and capitalist agriculture for 28.2 percent. This leaves 67.8 percent for the two urban modes, or about 6.8 million people. Giving the petty-commodity sector 500,000 artisans, 400,000 rural craftspeople, 550,000 merchants, 180,000 ulama and about one-half of urban migrants (ca. 300,000 families) this puts its labor force at 1.93 million (or 28.38 percent of 6.8 million) and thus 19.2 percent of the labor force, leaving 48.6 percent in the capitalist mode.

deteriorating living standards, and the like), and its impact on numerous classes, including workers, peasants, tribespeople, merchants, artisans, ulama and urban marginals. Each of these classes developed grievances against the state, local dominant classes and foreign capital in Iran. Our portrait of the new situation of dependency will be completed by an examination of Iran's foreign relations and economic and political place in the world during this period.

### III. Iran in the World-System: Toward the Semiperiphery?

Understanding Iran's place in the world-system of the 1960s and 1970s requires consideration of its economic and political relations with the new core power of the United States, the other advanced industrial nations of Europe and Japan, the socialist countries and especially the Soviet Union, and the Third World, particularly its Middle Eastern and Asian neighbors. Theoretically the most interesting issue is the extent to which Iran was moving from the periphery of the world-economy into what Wallerstein calls the semiperiphery, that middle echelon of states both in terms of economic rewards and political power in the world-system, a group which is simultaneously exploited vis-a-vis the core while itself exploiting the periphery.<sup>86</sup> Secondly, the examination of these relationships contributes to a fuller explanation of the concept of dependency, which after all implies dependency *on* another country or countries. To shed light on these issues, then, we will study both patterns of foreign trade and power-relationships between Iran and the rest of the world.

#### III.A. Iran's Foreign Trade

The key issues in terms of foreign trade are the balance of trade, the nature of imports and exports, and the terms of trade (we will look at trading partners below). Table 8.6 presents data on imports, exports and balance of trade for select years between 1953 and 1978. We can see the enormous expansion in imports and exports made possible by Iran's oil production, and the corresponding

<sup>86</sup> On the semiperiphery, see Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I*, 102-3, 196-97, and "Rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: concepts for comparative analysis," pp. 1-36 in his *The Capitalist World Economy*, 21, 23, 27, 33-34.

**Table 8.6**  
**Iran's Foreign Trade, 1953-78**  
 (in millions of dollars)

Year	Imports	Exports (without oil)	Exports (with oil)	Balance (without oil)	Balance (with oil)
1953	66.1	96.7	99.8	+30.6	+33.7
1958	605.9	103.8	402.6	-502.1	-203.3
1963	518.6	127.0	1,015.2	-391.6	+496.6
1968	1,408.9	214.8	2,003.7	-1,194.1	+594.8
1972	3,161.0	440.0	3,040.0	-2,721.0	-121.0
1978	18,400.0	520.0	24,020.0	-17,880.0	+5,620.0

Sources: Bhariar, *Economic Development in Iran*, 104-6 table 4; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 325 table 16.2. Exchange rate used: \$1 = 87.1 rials (1953), 76.5 rials (1958), 75.75 rials (1963, 1968).

stagnation of non-oil exports. The balance of trade was always negative without oil, and only sometimes positive even with it, a serious indication of Iran's absolute dependence on oil income after the successful oil-less experiment of the Mussadiq era was rolled back. When the trade was unbalanced, even with oil, this meant reliance on foreign loans, for a total of \$2.6 billion between 1963 and 1972.<sup>87</sup>

This reliance on oil points to the problematic composition of Iran's export trade. Oil and gas were already 77 percent of all exports by value in 1963, but this rose to 85 percent in 1972 and an incredible 98 percent in 1978 as oil prices rose. Equally discouraging was the performance of manufactured products in the small non-oil export sector. In 1977/78, modern industry accounted for \$111 million of Iran's \$523 million in non-oil exports, only 21 percent of this, while agriculture provided \$264 million in exports (51 percent) and traditional industry \$148 million (28 percent), with carpets alone at \$115 million surpassing all modern manufactures. Katouzian comments: "... it is most significant that the pattern of Iran's non-oil exports is still fundamentally the same as it was at the beginning of the century: carpets, cotton and (mainly dried) fruits still make up somewhat less than 60 percent of the total."<sup>88</sup> It is true that dependent trade patterns go back to 1900 (and thus the

<sup>87</sup> Pesaran, "Economic Development," 284.

<sup>88</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 326. See also *ibid.*, 325 table 16.3, 326 tables 16.4 and 16.5; Halliday, *Iran*, 160-61, 162 table 15; Baku, "Oil Revenue," 96 table 13; and Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie," 271 table 45.

big change occurred between 1800 and 1900 as we saw in Chapter Four). What was new was the great reliance on a single export, oil, which will someday run out, and the failure to develop other exports in any considerable degree. Iran's import-substitution strategy had led to industrial production for the domestic market, but had carved out no share of the more competitive world market for itself.

The nature of imports further accentuates the dependent trend of Iran's development. Of \$18.4 billion in total imports in 1977/78, \$6.1 billion (33 percent) were on machinery and vehicles, \$5.3 billion (29 percent) on steel, chemicals, paper, fibres and so forth, \$4.3 billion (24 percent) was "classified" (i.e. mainly on military hardware), and \$2.2 billion (12 percent) was on food. If one deducts the import of arms, parts to assemble and food from total exports, there is about \$2.6 billion left over that *might* ideally have been used for real development purposes—only about ten percent of oil income and less than 20 percent of all imports. This was in fact mostly squandered on consumption and corruption. I have seen little data on the terms of trade; Jazani claims that despite oil price rises Iran's imports became even more expensive, with import costs going up 20-25 percent in the first quarter of 1971 alone. What is certain is that reliance on oil exports was inherently unstable, as either the West would pass the costs of its own inflation back to Iran or prices for oil would decline, hampering Iran's ability to import. This profile of foreign trade is certainly that of a dependent country.<sup>89</sup>

### III.B. Iran's Relations with the West

Iran's foreign trade was oriented overwhelmingly toward the advanced industrial nations, especially the United States, West Germany and Japan (in this sense, a member of "the West"), as Table 8.7, on the sources of Iran's imports, suggests. When markets for non-oil exports are considered, the Soviet Union joins this group as an important trading partner. (Curiously, I have seen no data on where Iran's *oil* exports went, although it is fairly clear they went to the advanced industrial nations,

<sup>89</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 327 table 16.6; Thiemann, "Iran Under the Shah Regime," 93; Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 97.

**Table 8.7**  
**Leading Importers to Iran, 1959-1977**  
(in millions of dollars, with percent in parentheses)

Country	1959	1965	1970	1974	1977
West Germany	124.3 (22.8)	180.5 (20.1)	347.9 (20.8)	1,185.0 (17.0)	2,747.0 (19.5)
United States	94.6 (17.4)	170.4 (19.0)	217.4 (13.0)	1,321.5 (20.0)	2,205.0 (15.6)
Japan	54.7 (10.1)	71.5 (7.9)	201.2 (12.0)	999.4 (15.1)	2,215.0 (15.7)
Great Britain	78.2 (14.4)	114.7 (12.8)	162.7 (9.7)	529.5 (8.0)	n.a.
France	21.2 (3.9)	45.1 (5.0)	77.5 (4.6)	242.1 (3.7)	n.a.
Italy	19.5 (3.6)	41.4 (4.6)	67.9 (4.0)	199.4 (3.0)	n.a.
Others	151.7 (27.8)	274.8 (30.6)	572.0 (34.1)	2,136.8 (32.3)	6,933.0 (49.2)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>544.2</b>	<b>898.4</b>	<b>1,676.6</b>	<b>6,613.7</b>	<b>14,100.0</b>

Sources: Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie," 172 table 15 (although the source for this table is incorrect), and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 322 table 16.1.

and chief among them, Japan.) One other interesting index is that of the number of foreigners working in Iran. In 1965 4,000 work permits were issued to foreign citizens; this grew to 20,000 in 1975 and then leaped to 60,000 in 1977, mostly for Americans and Europeans working as technicians, professionals and managers in Iran.<sup>90</sup> Despite the seeming parity of West Germany, Japan and the United States as leading trade partners, one country enjoyed a unique relationship with Iran and the shah, whose significance we must now probe.

**Iran and the United States: a special relationship.** The United States took the lead from Great Britain as the undisputed hegemonic core power in Iran after the 1953 coup. Multiple ties—economic, political and strategic—were established between the two countries. The American attitude

<sup>90</sup> Gail Cook Johnson, *High-Level Manpower in Iran: From Hidden Conflict to Crisis* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), 16.

was clearly stated in 1957: "Iran is important to the United States for political, economic and military reasons. It has 1200 miles of common border with the U.S.S.R., occupies a strategic location in the Middle East ... and controls an important part of the world's proven oil reserves."<sup>91</sup> For his part, the shah had stressed as far back as 1954:

... the potentialities of friendly and close relations between the people of Iran and the United States are immense.... Iran has a great deal in common, in convictions, with the Western world regarding freedom and democracy. The way of life of the Western world fits in with our scheme of Islamic values.<sup>92</sup>

In 1976 Harold Saunders, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, affirmed that American interests in Iran had been constant for a generation because of "Iran's importance to the security of the Gulf region, the future of the Middle East and the production of oil."<sup>93</sup>

A greater American economic interest in Iran was already signalled by Eisenhower in 1953: "... of course, it will not be so easy for the Iranian economy to be restored, even if her refineries again begin to operate.... However, this is a problem that we should be able to help."<sup>94</sup> The American oil companies' lucrative 40 percent share of the 1954 oil deal—America's major stake in Pahlavi Iran—has already been noted. In the course of the 1960s and 1970s a considerable amount of direct foreign investment by American-based multinationals was added to this, in the agribusiness ventures, in the most advanced industrial sectors, such as petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and aluminum, and in the growing banking sector, where American banks played a major role. The United States overtook the British as the major foreign investor in the 1950s and held this position until the 1970s when the Japanese surpassed them. Halliday notes that "At the end of 1972 the USA had assets valued at \$570 millions in Iran—a large amount, but less than it had in Israel (\$600 millions), Libya (\$1,145 millions) or Saudi Arabia (\$2,000 millions)."<sup>95</sup> In 1978, some 500 American

<sup>91</sup> 1957 *Mutual Security Act*, Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, House of Representatives, 786, quoted by Ashraf, "Iran," 89.

<sup>92</sup> *New York Times*, December 15, 1954, as quoted by Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 57-58.

<sup>93</sup> U.S. Congress, House Committee on International Organizations: Human Rights in Iran, Hearings, August 3 and September 8, 1976, quoted by Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie," 180.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted by Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 51.

<sup>95</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 255-56. Data in this paragraph is also drawn from *ibid.*, 153 table 12; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 293 note 5; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 195, 243; Yaghmaian, "Economic Development," 164-5 appendix 1; Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms," 85 table 17; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 193 table 13; Seyfollahi, "Development of the Dependent Bourgeoisie," 231, 234 table 27, 270 table 43; and Mahdi, "The Iranian Struggle for Liberation," 15.

firms had \$700 million invested in Iran, and 12 large banks had another \$2.2 billion in assets in Iran. To the oil interests and direct foreign investment should be added trade between the two countries, in which the United States was a consistent first or second to West Germany or Japan throughout this period, as Table 8.7 indicated. This may be considered a second circuit of capital, for the money paid in royalties and revenues by the West to Iran made possible the purchase of vast quantities of Western goods. There was moreover a massive arms trade in the 1970s which does not figure in the trade data and which was thoroughly dominated by the United States (and is discussed below).

Beyond these purely economic ties lurked perhaps even greater political and strategic bonds. Richard Helms, one-time CIA director and ambassador to Iran referred to Iran as 'in political terms, the center of the world.'<sup>96</sup> Ashraf refers to U.S.-Iranian relations in the 1950s as characterized by "force and dollars." Total American economic and military aid to Iran from 1953 to 1960 came to over \$1 billion, a sum not surpassed by any other Third World country except Turkey. Aid between 1950 and 1970 totalled \$2.3 billion, over \$1.3 billion of which was military. A transparent pattern of political influence followed this aid: the first \$68.4 million being announced within three weeks after the August 1953 coup, \$127 million right after the 1954 oil deal, and other grants after Iran joined the pro-Western Baghdad Pact in 1955 and CENTO in 1958.<sup>97</sup> Though the evidence in the case of the appointment of 'Ali Amini as prime minister in 1961 is not conclusive, it certainly fits within this pattern. Amini's subsequent fall can likewise be attributed in part to the withdrawal of American support; thereafter the United States government settled into a policy of unambiguous support for the shah.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>96</sup> See Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 174. The quote is not sourced.

<sup>97</sup> Ashraf, "Iran," 120; James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion. The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 114; Pesaran, "Economic Development," 275; Halliday, *Iran*, 91.

<sup>98</sup> Two scholars who doubt that the United States actually imposed the choice of Amini are Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 214, and Nikki Keddie, personal communication, December 14, 1981. Abrahamian reports that "As the shah later admitted to an American correspondent, it was the Kennedy administration that had forced him to name Amini as prime minister": *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 422-23. Hooglund, based on information supplied by William Miller, political officer at the Tehran embassy notes that the U.S. informed the shah of its support for Amini: *Land and Revolution*, 47-48, 161 note 45. One may also consult Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, who cites *Kayhan International*, October 22 and November 5, 1977, and Halliday, *Iran*, 26.

This relationship can be seen in the nexus of strategic alliances entered into by the two countries. In October 1955 the shah joined the Baghdad Pact despite widespread internal opposition. This was a British-sponsored military and economic alliance among Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and Iran; though not a formal member the United States assisted financially and served on its standing committees. After a coup d'état overthrew the monarchy in Iraq in July 1958 the three remaining members formed CENTO (the Central Treaty Organization), another pro-Western alliance. After briefly flirting with closer ties to the Soviet Union (this was the time of the possibly U.S.-condoned Qarani coup plot against him), the shah signed a bilateral military treaty in March 1959 committing the U.S. to take "appropriate action, including the use of armed forces" in case of communist or "communist-inspired" aggression against Iran. This cemented the military relationship going back to World War 2. From 1945 to 1970 over 11,000 Iranians received military training in the United States, while American advisers were attached to Iran's police, army and SAVAK. Tehran became the CIA's Middle Eastern headquarters in 1973, with most of the emphasis on the Soviet Union and China rather than Iranian affairs.<sup>99</sup>

A new level of commitment was reached in the early 1970s. After the pullout of British forces from the Persian Gulf kingdoms in 1971, Iran emerged as the dominant military power in the Gulf area. This fit well with the Nixon Doctrine of promoting strong regional allies to maintain a favorable economic and political atmosphere in various parts of the Third World. As a 1977 U.S. Senate report acknowledged: "... if Iran is called in to intervene in the internal affairs of any Gulf state, it must be recognized in advance by the United States that this is the role for which Iran is being primed and blame cannot be assigned for Iran's carrying out an implied assignment."<sup>100</sup> Iran was the most prominent of a group of pro-American regional powers that included Brazil, Israel and Indonesia. In a secret agreement of May 1972 Nixon agreed to furnish the shah with any conventional weapons he wanted, bypassing the American departments of state and defence. This was, in

<sup>99</sup> Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 56-57; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 116, 119, 402; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 200; Halliday, *Iran*, 83, 91-92.

<sup>100</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, *Access to Oil: The United States' Relationship with Saudi Arabia and Iran* (December 1977), 84, quoted in Zavarcei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 172.

Halliday's words, an "unparalleled" step in American relations with a Third World country.<sup>101</sup> It opened the floodgates of weapons sales to Iran in the 1970s, an arms bazaar fully mirroring the scope of the oil boom. Total U.S. military sales to Iran came to \$17 billion for 1950-77, \$16 billion of this after 1972, a sum which ate up almost 20 percent of Iran's oil revenues and on the American side accounted for over half of all U.S. arms sales to foreign countries by 1977. A bilateral agreement in mid-1976 projected \$40 billion in U.S.-Iranian trade between 1976 and 1980. By 1978 there were 37,000 American military and civilian personnel in Iran, most enjoying diplomatic immunity, with military technicians drawing \$9,000 a month salaries from the Iranian government. A 1977 U.S. Senate report admitted openly: "The presence of U.S. personnel and the presumed inability of Iranians to utilize all the recent arms purchases could give the U.S. leverage over any Iranian intention that runs counter to U.S. interest."<sup>102</sup>

Thus, despite Iran's seemingly independent foreign policy and oil diplomacy, by the eve of the revolution the shah had become increasingly dependent on the United States in a web of economic, military, political and strategic relations. As Halliday observed in 1978: "... the Shah knows that without the cooperation of the US state and US capital his regime would not be viable. For without the guarantees given by the USA to the Iranian state the present foreign and domestic policies would be impossible."<sup>103</sup>

**Iran's relations with the other advanced industrial nations.** No other country came anywhere near the kind of influence exercised by the United States on Iran. Among the European countries Great Britain gradually fell behind West Germany as a leading trade partner (see Table 8.7 on imports), to the position of fourth overall. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was well compensated with 25 million pounds sterling and the new British Petroleum had a healthy 40 percent share in the post-1954 consortium, Britain's largest stake in Iran. In the 1970s Britain was a major arms seller,

<sup>101</sup> On the Nixon Doctrine and Iran's role as a regional power, see Halliday, *Iran*, 93-94, 248, 339 note 1; Ramsbotham interview, tape 1: 8-9, 14-15; Zavareci, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 170; and Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 205-7.

<sup>102</sup> U.S. Senate Committee, *Access to Oil*, 83, quoted by Zavareci, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 171. On the military sales see Halliday, *Iran*, 95; Pesaran, "Economic Development," 285 note, 287 note; Zavareci, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 172; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 207; and Graham, *Iran*, 91.

<sup>103</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 254.

particularly of tanks (accounting for most of the \$971 million in exports to Iran in 1977-78), and was active in the auto assembly industry, as well as banking. But all of this was a far cry from Britain's traditional position as a major power in Iran and reflected the United Kingdom's general decline in the world-economy after World War 2.<sup>104</sup>

By the same token West Germany's economic recovery and eventual "miracle" in the 1960s catapulted it into a strong economic position in Iran, as leading importer from 1959 to 1970 and again in 1977 (see Table 8.7). German investments in Iran fell off in the 1970s (well behind Japan and the United States), but were profitably placed in pharmaceuticals, steel and agricultural machinery. Willi Brandt went to Tehran in 1972 and concluded agreements on long-term economic cooperation. In 1974 the shah bought a 25 percent share in the Krupp steel industry, Katouzian calling this investment in a declining sector of Western industry "one of His Majesty's greatest follies in the field of foreign investment."<sup>105</sup>

The other European countries collectively accounted for about 20 percent of Iran's imports (see Table 8.7), led by France and Italy, with 3-5 percent each. France also had the next largest amount of direct foreign investment in Iran, with joint ventures in steel, autos, chemicals and modernization of the rail network. A June 1974 accord called for \$4 billion in trade agreements over the next ten years with France to sell Iran five nuclear reactors. Holland, Belgium and Switzerland each accounted for a 5-6 percent share of foreign investment in the 1960s, while Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Spain and Finland together claimed 7.3 percent of Iran's foreign trade in 1977/78. Norway, Denmark and Australia also had smallish economic links with Iran.<sup>106</sup>

Dwarfing all the European countries except West Germany, and generally ranking second in terms of economic relations with Iran to the United States, was the newest core power in the world-

<sup>104</sup> "The Borderlands of Soviet Central Asia, II," 393; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 321; Yaghmaian, "Economic Development," 166 appendix 1.

<sup>105</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 321. See also Halliday, *Iran*, 153 table 12, 256; Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms," 85 table 17; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 196-97; and Thiemann, "Iran Under the Shah Regime," 92.

<sup>106</sup> On Iran's relations with these countries see Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms," 85 table 17; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 268; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 193 table 13; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 322; and Halliday, *Iran*, 153 table 12.

economy, Japan. Japan passed Britain by 1970 and the United States by 1977 (excluding arms sales) as a supplier of imports to Iran (Table 8.7), especially of electrical equipment. Involved in petrochemicals, electrical appliances, insurance and the financial markets, Japan was the largest investor in Iran, with 40 percent of investments made in 1975/76. This economic power, while significant, fit within the broad pattern of Iran's dependence on the advanced industrial economies, thus not really posing a challenge to American hegemony in Iran.<sup>107</sup>

### III.C. Iran's Relations with the Socialist Countries and the Third World

The justification for treating the second and third worlds together is their relative insignificance economically for Iran's position in the world-system, though political relations were naturally important both in the case of the Soviet Union, and in that of Iran's neighbors in the Gulf, including Iraq. These countries played no role in Iran's dependent development, but are of some relevance to Iran's claims of acting as a regional military power.

Iran's relations with the socialist world. As Halliday notes, Iran's overall relations with the Soviet Union have been "relatively tranquil" since 1953, except for the 1959-62 period. The return of Iran's gold reserves in 1954 patched things up as did a 1956 visit to Moscow by the shah. Relations were severely strained by Iran's 1959 bilateral defense treaty with the United States but relaxed again in 1962-63 when the shah pledged not to allow American missiles to be based in Iran (it was the time of the Cuban missile crisis). Thereafter relations improved and a *de facto* bargain was struck: the USSR accepted the shah's rule and American hegemony in Iran, while receiving a number of economic agreements of its own and a stable Iran on its borders. The shah meanwhile used the relationship to neutralize the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party and for certain economic benefits. The relationship therefore was based on mutual trade and political stability. The Soviet Union provided about three to four percent of Iran's imports from 1955 to 1968 (and only one percent in 1973) but took 14-21 percent of non-oil exports for 1955-75. Products traded consisted of Iranian gas, textiles,

<sup>107</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 321-22; Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms," 85 table 17; Halliday, *Iran*, 153 table 12, 256.

raw cotton and dried fruits for Soviet military equipment, machinery and trucks, iron, steel, cement and wood. Thus the old pattern of being an important market for Iranian goods continued based on the convenience of proximity, but the USSR could not really compete with the United States, Japan and Europe in world trade. There was also a major joint investment in a steel mill for Iran and a pipeline to transport natural gas to the Soviet Union. This brought 1,500 Soviet technicians to Iran, without a great economic benefit as Iran spent \$700 million to construct the pipeline while the steel plant earned only \$4 million in 1969-70 instead of a projected \$600 million in exports.<sup>108</sup>

Other socialist countries also made various economic agreements with the shah's Iran. Czechoslovakia sold Iran a machine-tool plant built at Tabriz in 1970; Rumania built a tractor factory in Tabriz and provided experts to start up the vegetable oil industry. Diplomatic relations with Cuba on the other hand were broken by Iran in 1975 when Castro met in Moscow with the Tudeh's general-secretary. Relations with China reflected the vicissitudes of that country's foreign and domestic policies. Iran did not recognize China from 1949 to 1971 and the shah in his 1961 autobiography predicted that the Soviet Union would soon realize the threat posed by "the new sprawling, fast-breeding Giant of the Far East, lying at their door."<sup>109</sup> China for its part referred to "the puppet Shah regime" in 1966. But mutual hostility to the Soviet Union, Chinese superficiality in its assessment of the situation in Iran and its own opening toward the West led to rapprochement, exchange of high-level visits and mutual praise after 1971. The shah's sister and the queen made trips to China which Hua Kuo Feng reciprocated by travelling to Iran in 1978.

**Iran in the Middle East.** It was in the Middle East that the shah sought to make good Iran's claims as a new regional power, politically aggressive and militarily interventionist. The purpose of this policy was to bolster his and the army's image and to weaken any state or movement that could undermine the regime. Military interventions thus included the Yemeni civil war (1962-70), the

<sup>108</sup> On Soviet-Iranian relations see Halliday, *Iran*, 258, 260-61; Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 43-44; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 119; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 200, 278, 293 note 2, 319-20; Bharier, *Economic Development in Iran*, 108-9 table 3, 113 table 5; and Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms," 86 table 18.

<sup>109</sup> Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, 316. This paragraph also draws on Halliday, *Iran*, 263-266; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 279-80, 317; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 241-42.

seizure of three Gulf islands from the newly formed United Arab Emirates in November 1971, the deployment of several thousand troops to aid Sultan Qabus of Oman against rebels in the Dhofar province from December 1973 to late 1976 (with 25 officers and 186 troops killed in 1975-76), assistance to Pakistan in 1973 to deal with Baluchi separatists, and support for Iraqi Kurds between 1972 and 1975. In Halliday's judgment:

No third-world state has a record of intervention outside its frontiers comparable to Iran's in the period since the mid-1960s. South Korea, Indonesia, Zaire, Israel, Brazil and Saudi Arabia have all intervened, directly or indirectly, in support of counter-revolutionary forces beyond their frontiers, but none have done so on the scale of Iran.<sup>110</sup>

Relations with Iraq were frequently poor due to the Kurdish minority on both sides of the border, occasional involvement in coup plots by both countries, and a border dispute in Khuzistan over the Shatt al-Arab waterway which almost led to war in 1968 (and eventually did in 1980). In March 1975 Iran's military buildup forced an advantageous resolution of the border dispute in exchange for stopping its assistance to Iraq's Kurds.<sup>111</sup>

In the mid-1970s Iran tried to improve relations with many of the region's nations from Egypt to India by providing money for joint capital investment projects. This was particularly true of Egypt which had broken relations with Iran in 1960 under Nasser. According to a 1974 economic agreement Iran would finance numerous Egyptian development projects with a \$1 billion loan. Conservative Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Jordan also moved closer to Iran based on common interests in stability and a pro-American orientation.<sup>112</sup> Iran's relations with the other American-supported Middle Eastern power, Israel, were even closer, if kept somewhat out of the public eye. Iran had recognized Israel's de facto existence in 1950; the Israelis helped train SAVAK later in the decade. Thereafter, despite the shah's pro-Arab OPEC price maneuvers in 1967 and 1973 the relationship was strengthened, based on large numbers of military officers trained in Israel, arms trade both ways, the common enemy in Iraq, major oil supplies (with Iran financing Israel's pipeline to the Red Sea after 1967 and guaranteeing Israel's oil needs after 1975 as part of

<sup>110</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 272. See also *ibid.*, 271-72.

<sup>111</sup> On Iraq and Iran see Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 316; Halliday, *Iran*, 274-76; and Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 270.

<sup>112</sup> Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 164-69; Halliday, *Iran*, 278; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 269.

the secret clauses of the Sinai disengagement treaty), and growing Israeli exports to Iran (from \$22 million in 1970 to \$63 million in 1974).<sup>113</sup> The closeness of Iran and Israel well served conservative American policy interests in the Middle East.

**Relations with Asian neighbors and the rest of the Third World.** The most significant of Iran's relations with the remaining Third World nations were with its Asian neighbors, this time Pakistan and Afghanistan to the east. After the 1973 overthrow of the monarchy in Afghanistan, "Iran played an active role there, supporting a pro-Western group of officers and giving aid in order to tie the Afghan economy and communications system more closely to the Iranian."<sup>114</sup> Some \$2 billion in aid was promised to Afghanistan in 1974-75, as was \$647 million to Pakistan, whom as we have seen the shah lent support for an anti-Baluchi counterinsurgency campaign. Another tie was Pakistan's five percent share in Iran's aluminum plant. India was also offered \$133 million in aid as part of the shah's dream of creating a west Asian conservative coalition and to offset Soviet aid in the area. India had a stake in petroleum joint ventures in Iran as did Iran in India. Further afield in Asia Iran had some economic ties on a state-to-state basis with Bangladesh, South Korea, Taiwan and Indonesia. Trade with the continent of Africa was quite small, growing from \$25.3 million to \$99.1 million from 1971 to 1975 but falling from 1.0 to 0.8 percent of Iran's total trade, compared with about 25 percent of total trade with Asia in 1975. The Brazilian state oil company had a small joint venture in Iran but trade with Latin America must have been small. These findings both reinforce the hypothesis of Iran's predominant dependence on the West and buttress somewhat its claims of constituting a regional sub-power vis-a-vis such neighbors as Afghanistan.

<sup>113</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 278-9; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 317; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 403.

<sup>114</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 276. For the data in this paragraph, see also *ibid.*, 276-77; Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 174; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 243; Barthel, "The Struggle for the Re-establishment of National Rights," 67-68 table 2, 70 table 4; and Asheghian, "American Joint Venture Manufacturing Firms," 86 table 18.

### III.D. Comparisons, Conclusions

We may now bring this chapter to a close by addressing the questions: was Iran's dependent development of a type and magnitude to pull it out of the periphery into the semiperiphery? How does its experience compare with such countries as Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, Turkey or India? As we have seen, Iran's GNP and industrial growth rates were among the highest in the Third World. Given the lack of manufactured exports and dependence on oil revenues for its growth, however, these proved rather deceptive indices of development. Like other oil producers—Iraq, Algeria, Venezuela and Nigeria—Iran suffered from agricultural shortfalls and massive bureaucratic corruption. Iraq and Algeria arguably channelled their wealth into public projects and cooptation of new social classes more astutely than Iran and Nigeria.<sup>115</sup> While pulling ahead of less populous regional competitors and neighbors such as Iraq, Afghanistan and the Gulf kingdoms, Iran reached a level roughly comparable with such Middle Eastern industrializers as Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan in many respects.<sup>116</sup> A Hudson Institute report of 1975 concluded however that even if Iran met its own high predicted growth rates, by 1985 "it would have an economy not much more developed than India's and equal to or just behind Mexico's."<sup>117</sup>

Far from becoming a "new Japan" as the shah had boasted, Iran on the eve of the 1980s was not, it would seem, even a solid member of the semiperiphery. Compared with more clearcut contenders for this rank such as Brazil, South Korea and perhaps Taiwan, Iran was far less industrialized and lacked their financial and monopoly capital sectors, relying instead on its state and oil revenues, and letting both agriculture and industry, the only real long-term guarantees of development, lag far behind. For a brief period in the 1970s Iran had seemed to be moving closer to this group in the semiperiphery but it was an uncertain, *dependent* progress. The failure of this movement would be sealed by a decisive event in world history—the Iranian Revolution.

<sup>115</sup> This is the opinion of Burke and Lubeck, "Explaining Social Movements," 664.

<sup>116</sup> Issawi presents selected indicators of development comparing Iran, Egypt and Turkey in 1950 and 1972: "The Iranian Economy 1925-1975," 134 table 4.3, 136 table 4.4.

<sup>117</sup> Hudson Institute, *Oil Money and the Ambitions of a Nation* (Paris, 1974), as summarized by Halliday, *Iran*, 168.

## Chapter Nine

### The Making of the Iranian Revolution, 1977-1979

I cannot believe and I do not accept that any prudent individual can believe that the purpose of all these sacrifices was to have less expensive melons, that we sacrificed our young men to have less expensive housing... No one would give his life for better agriculture.

Dignity is better than full bellies. Iranian masses have fought only for God not for worldly affairs.

—Ayatullah Ruhullah Khomeini, in two speeches on Tehran Radio, September 8, 1979 and September 12, 1979, texts in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, September 10, 1979 and November 13, 1979, quoted in Hossein Zafarian, "Analytical Approach to Correlation Between Marxism and Iran's Islamic Revolution," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of International Relations, Claremont Graduate School (1984), 162.

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The reaction of the workers in the Azmayesh factory to Khomeini's famous statement that 'we have not made revolution for cheap melons, we have made it for Islam' was

they say we have not made revolution for economic betterment! What have we made it for, then? They say, for Islam! What does Islam mean then? We made it for the betterment of the conditions of our lives.

—Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 48.

These two quotes alone, one from Ayatullah Khomeini, the acknowledged leader of the Iranian Revolution, one by a group of the factory workers whose strikes helped paralyze the shah's regime, hint at some of the wide-ranging debates on the nature and causes of the Iranian Revolution of 1977-79. Namely, were economic or religious motivations paramount? Who made the revolution, and why? What causal factors must be considered in giving an adequate account of this social upheaval? What does Iran's recent revolution tell us about theories of revolution, and vice versa?

This chapter provides answers to these questions within the framework of our study as a whole. After a look at the existing literature on revolutions, and various explanations of the Iranian Revolution, my own multi-causal perspective is presented. This approach is illuminated by a look at the 1960-63 uprising as a precursor to the Iranian Revolution that failed for specific analytic reasons; the emergence of a new version of Iran's urban, multi-class populist alliance in the 1970s; the cultures of opposition, organizations and social forces that coalesced in the revolution; the course of events from 1977 to 1979; and finally an analytic discussion of the factors and forces involved in the making of the revolution.

### **I. Theories of Revolution and the Iranian Case**

**Three generations of theory.** In addition to such common-sense views of revolution as "misery breeds revolt," or the state faces "an unmanageable accumulation of difficulties," or that radical new ideas are somehow crucial to the making of revolutions—all of which may be helpful but raise further questions of why and how—Jack Goldstone has identified three generations of social science theories of revolution.<sup>1</sup> The first generation, from the 1920s and 1930s, may be termed the "Natural History of Revolutions" school.<sup>2</sup> Basing their work largely on descriptions of the major revolutions, particularly the French, these writers—especially Brinton—found certain patterns they felt characteristic of all revolutions. These included: prior to revolutions, intellectuals cease to support the regime and the state undertakes reforms; outbreaks of revolution have more to do with a state crisis than active opposition; after taking power, conflicts arise within the revolutionary coalition, with first the moderates, then more radical elements, and finally military leaders coming to power; the last phase is one of pragmatism within a new status quo. Goldstone and others have found these insights plausible as description, but not adequate to the task of explaining why revolutions occur. (I

<sup>1</sup> This section draws on Jack Goldstone's articles, "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions," and "Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation," pp. 425-453 in *World Politics*, volume XXXII, number 3 (April 1980).

<sup>2</sup> Key works include L. P. Edwards, *The Natural History of Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927); G. S. Pettee, *The Process of Revolution* (New York: Harper and Row, 1937); and Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage, [1938] 1965).

will take up the fit between each of the theories discussed here and the Iranian case in the next section.)

Goldstone's second generation of theorists dating from the 1950s and 1960s, tried to explain why and when revolutions arise, using explicit, social science theories of several types, mostly derived from the then prevalent modernization paradigm. Neil Smelser and Chalmers Johnson looked at the imbalances in subsystems of a society as disorienting the population so that radical ideologies spread and a crisis may then prove capable of bringing down the government.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, J. C. Davies and T. R. Gurr took a psychological approach to identify what kinds of misery lead to revolt. In an interesting extension of de Tocqueville's observation that liberalization and growing prosperity triggered the French Revolution, Davies noted a "J-curve"—a period of rising expectations followed by a sudden economic downturn—as a recipe for revolt.<sup>4</sup> Goldstone's criticisms of this second generation are that the initiating pattern is vague (structural disequilibrium), the critical variables are hard to observe (cognitive attitudes), they explain too much (all outbreaks of collective violence) and not enough (why revolutions are so rare), and lack an explanation of revolutionary outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

This brings us to the third generation of theories—the works of Eisenstadt, Paige, Tilly, Trimberger and Skocpol since the 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Goldstone notes these are all broadly speaking structural theories, focussing analysis on such new dimensions as state structures, international pressures, peasant society, the armed forces and elite behavior.<sup>7</sup> Though each of these theorists makes

<sup>3</sup> Goldstone, "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions," 193, summarizing Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1963), and Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966).

<sup>4</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1955), 175, 178; Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); J. C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," pp. 5-19 in *American Sociological Review*, volume 27 (1962).

<sup>5</sup> Goldstone, "Theories of Revolution," 431-34. In comparing them with the third generation of structural theories he also finds them too purposive or voluntarist, but this is in my view their one improvement over their successors: Goldstone, "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions," 193-94.

<sup>6</sup> Their works include S. N. Eisenstadt, *Revolutions and the Transformation of Societies: A Comparative Study of Civilizations* (New York: Free Press, 1978); Jeffrey M. Paige, *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World* (New York: Free Press, 1975); Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1978); Ellen Kay Trimberger, *Revolution From Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt, and Peru* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1978); and Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions*.

<sup>7</sup> Goldstone, "Theories of Revolution," 435. He puts Tilly's resource mobilization perspective in the second generation, essentially it seems for its voluntaristic approach to contending parties, but both by periodization and

important contributions, it is Skocpol's oeuvre which aims at the most comprehensive and potentially generalizable theory of social revolutions, and has attracted the most extensive commentary and debate. Skocpol defines social revolutions as "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structure ... accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below."<sup>8</sup> Arguing against the view that revolutions are "made" by mass-mobilizing, ideologically-informed social movements and actors, she stresses the structural reasons for the outbreak of revolutions, especially the weakening of old regimes by outside military pressures, internal splits between elites and the state, and widespread participation by peasant communities. In a subsequent article, Skocpol observes that the model used to account for the French, Russian and Chinese revolutions in *States and Social Revolutions* applies only to certain kinds of states—"established agrarian states facing intensifying pressures from more economically developed competitors within the international states system."<sup>9</sup> She denies it can be generalized to small, dependent Third World states in today's world. In another article she does extend her theory to Third World countries in which "the holders of prerevolutionary state power are either colonial rulers or else indigenous dictators closely dependent upon foreign backing and links to the capitalist world economy."<sup>10</sup> She specifies:

Social revolutions have happened in such settings when major shifts in world economic and geopolitical conditions have weakened the repressive capacities of colonial or neo-colonial regimes, and when peasants have either been able to rebel autonomously through local communal structures, or nationalist guerrilla movements have devised ways to mobilize peasants directly. While the combinations of causes involved are not "mechanically" the same as in *States and Social Revolutions*, the same theoretical perspective—centered on state structures, international conditions affecting state power, and agrarian class structures—is clearly at work.<sup>11</sup>

As we shall see, when Skocpol turns to the case of the Iranian Revolution, she backtracks further from her models of social revolution, while trying to remain faithful to her structuralist method. Let us turn now to her and others' explanations of the Iranian case.

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emphasis on new variables Tilly belongs more properly in the third generation in my view.

<sup>8</sup> Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Theda Skocpol, "Analyzing Causal Configurations in History: A Rejoinder to Nichols," pp. 187-194 in Richard F. Tomasson, editor, *Comparative Social Research. An Annual Publication*, volume 9: *Historical Studies* (Greenwich, Connecticut and London: JAI Press, Inc., 1986), 191.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, referring to her "What Makes Peasants Revolutionary?" pp. 157-179 in Scott Guggenheim and Robert Weller, editors, *Power and Protest in the Countryside* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> Skocpol, "Analyzing Causal Configurations," 191-92.

**Explanations of the Iranian Revolution.** Various scholars and commentators have noted the applicability of certain theories of revolution to the Iranian case. Many of the imputed characteristics of all revolutions listed by the Natural History school, and especially Brinton, are broadly found in the Iranian case.<sup>12</sup> The fit of Davies's J-curve to the economic situation in the 1970s has also been noted.<sup>13</sup> These observations however remain undeveloped in the literature, and in any case subject to the criticisms already noted—that these “theories” are mainly descriptive and do not tell us what causal factors lie behind the phenomena observed.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, Theda Skocpol has tried her own hand at explaining the Iranian Revolution, and the difficulties this leads her into are instructive.<sup>15</sup> In the first place, virtually *none* of the structural mechanisms found in the French, Russian and Chinese cases apply to Iran: there was no external pressure on the Iranian state, no great elite-state conflict, and no mass-based peasant movement in the countryside. Nor does Iran fit the model of Third World revolutions traced by Skocpol: again, there was no major shift in world economic and geopolitical conditions to weaken the Iranian state,

<sup>12</sup> This has been noted by Bill, “Power and Religion in Revolutionary Iran,” 30 (although what he takes from Brinton is largely only the view of revolution as “chaos” and violence), and more subtly by Keddie, “Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective,” 589-91.

<sup>13</sup> Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 76; Hossein Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution in Iran 1962-1982* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm; and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 85, 108 note 84; and Keddie, “Iran's Revolutions in Comparative Perspective,” 589-91, who feels that Brinton and the J-curve models fit Iran better than “most existing socioeconomic comparative schemes,” i.e. Skocpol, Tilly, Moore, Hobsbawm, Rudé.

<sup>14</sup> Four dissertations which look at Iran in light of theories of revolution are: Yadollah Alidoost-Khaybari, “Religious Revolutionaries: An Analysis of the Religious Groups' Victory in the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79,” Department of Sociology, University of Michigan (1981); Ali Pourtaei, “Toward a Synthesis of Theories of Revolution: The Cases of Iran and Egypt,” University of Oklahoma (1982); Mohammad Amjad, “Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution: Role of the State and Social Classes,” Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of California, Riverside (1986); and Seyed Buik Mohanmadi, “Social Change in Iran. The Roots of the 1978-79 Revolution,” Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky (1982). I have not had time to study these carefully, but it may be noted that Alidoost-Khaybari uses Tilly's and others' resource mobilization approach to explain why religious groups gained control of the movement (i.e. it focusses on the outcome of the revolution), and Pourtaei seeks to synthesize most of the theories of revolution available, including structural, Marxist, value dissensus (Chalmers Johnson), relative deprivation (Davies), “strain” (Smelser), and resource mobilization, and for good measure adds in a discussion of ideology, leadership and organization, as well as of “windfalls as precipitating factors.” Amjad also attempts a synthesis of theories of revolution, and relies especially on Gramscian concepts.

<sup>15</sup> This paragraph draws on Skocpol's “Analyzing Casual Configurations” and her article on Iran: “Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution.” For critiques of Skocpol, one might consult William H. Sewell, Jr., “Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case,” pp. 57-85 in *Journal of Modern History*, volume 57, number 1 (March 1985); Elizabeth Nichols, “Skocpol on Revolution: Comparative Analysis vs. Historical Conjuncture,” pp. 163-186 in Richard F. Tomasson, editor, *Comparative Social Research. An Annual Publication*, volume 9: *Historical Studies* (Greenwich, Connecticut and London: JAI Press, Inc., 1986); and John P. Tuman, “The Iranian Revolution: A Challenge to Theda Skocpol's Theory of Revolution,” pp. 32-41 in *Berkeley Journal of Development Studies* (Spring 1986). A work that stands in a class by itself is Farideh Farhi's dissertation on the Iranian Revolution, in which Skocpol's general principles of analysis (but not her specific model) are critically applied: Farideh Farhi, “State Disintegration and Urban-Based Revolutionary Crisis: The Iranian Case,” Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Colorado (1986).

and no mobilized peasantry. She is then forced to turn Iran into a *unique* case and resort to various *ad hoc* mechanisms to explain the revolution, finding these in the rentier nature of the state and the existence of a mobilizing ideology and urban network in Shi'a Islam. She retreats further from the model of *States and Social Revolutions* in concluding that here was one revolution that was "deliberately and coherently made" and that the definition of a social revolution includes transformation of dominant ideologies. While it is to her credit to recognize that the Iranian Revolution challenges her previous theories, she uses the case not to revise her model but to claim that Iran is virtually unique. It seems to me that the opposite strategy—of trying to account for the Iranian Revolution with other theoretical principles and then reflecting on theories of revolution—might be more fruitful, and I shall articulate my own perspective below.

First, though, we can approach the case of Iran from a different direction by looking at the rich debates among Iran specialists (rather than theorists of revolution) over the causes and nature of the revolution. These are, after all, the scholars who know the Iranian case most intimately, and if existing theories do not match their accounts, this too raises questions for theories of revolution. Though there are many cross-cutting ways to categorize their views in the literature (and many writers cross the lines I shall adopt here), three basic points of view can be roughly discerned: those who argue for the primacy of political-economic causes, those who insist on the Islamic nature of the revolution, and those who wish to synthesize economic, political and ideological factors.

The Islamic interpretation of the Iranian Revolution emphasizes the role of culture and ideology, stressing the religious roots of the revolution—that the shah was overthrown for failing to follow Islamic principles, that the revolution's causes were not economic, and that the uniqueness of the Iranian Revolution lies in its ideological orientation.<sup>16</sup> This naturally is the view held by the clerical leaders of the revolution, beginning with Ayatullah Khomeini. Thus Khomeini said in October 1979:

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<sup>16</sup> In addition to the works I shall cite in this paragraph, see the discussions and sources in Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 501-3, and Val Moghadam, "Populist Revolution, War and the Islamic State in Iran," paper presented at the annual meetings of the Political Economy of the World System section of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta, Georgia (March 24-26, 1988), 4, 28-29 note 1.

[The left] did not contribute anything. They did not help the revolution at all.... They were not decisive for the victory, they were not responsible, they did not contribute anything.... [The people who were killed by the tens of thousands died] For Islam. The people fought for Islam.<sup>17</sup>

The degree to which this rewrites history by one involved in the midst of a complex struggle will become obvious below. The view that the revolution was not primarily economic in origin has, however, also found academic proponents. Thus Hamid Algar has argued that "the basic characteristic of the Revolution, which distinguishes it from other movements that have taken place in Iran during the past hundred years, is its ideological and Islamic nature."<sup>18</sup> A more developed, social scientifically-informed variant of this position is offered by Arjomand, who argues that revolutions are most meaningfully distinguished by their "value-relevance," thus classifying Iran's as a world-historical revolution on a par with the English, French, Russian and fascist revolutions. This leads him to focus on the ulama-state relationship as central to the Iranian Revolution, and to emphasize its Islamic outcome. He minimizes working-class participation and finds similarities with fascism as a populist, mass-mobilizing ideology, and parallels with Stone's interpretation of the English Revolution as driven by Puritanism in its ideas, organization and leadership: "A parallel assertion can be made regarding the Shi'ite clerics, and with much greater confidence."<sup>19</sup>

Against this interpretation one finds a much larger group of Iran specialists stressing the political-economic origins of the revolution. Perhaps the ideal-typical form of this argument is Ervand Abrahamian's contention that the revolution resulted from a disjuncture of political and economic development:

<sup>17</sup> Oriana Fallaci, "An Interview with Khomeini," pp. 29-31 in *The New York Times Magazine* (October 7, 1979), 30. Recall also the epigraph to this chapter by Khomeini. For further views of the ayatullah on the nature of the revolution, see Zafarian, "Analytical Approach," 162-68, and Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution. Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), 325-27, 338-39.

<sup>18</sup> This quote is from Algar's introduction to the *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, translated from the Persian by Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1980), as given by Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 5:9 note 1. Algar has also contended that "The Iranian revolution has been, among other things, an implicit repudiation of Marxism as a revolutionary ideology and as a doctrine relevant to the problems of Iranian society or valid for humanity at large": see Algar's "Preface" to Ali Shari'ati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies. An Islamic Critique*, translated from the Persian by R. Campbell (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1980), 12. For a more nuanced statement on the causes of the revolution see Algar's introduction to Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Said Amir Arjomand, "The Causes and Significance of the Iranian Revolution," pp. 41-66 in *State, Culture and Society*, volume 1, number 3 (1985), 60, and *passim* for his general argument.

... the failure of the Pahlavi regime to make political modifications appropriate to the changes taking place in the economy and society inevitably strained the links between the social structure and the political structure, blocked the channeling of social grievances into the political system, widened the gap between new social forces and the ruling circles, and, most serious of all, cut down the few bridges that had in the past connected traditional social forces, especially the bazaars, with the political establishment.<sup>20</sup>

In this view, Islamic forces simply rushed to fill a void left by the systematic destruction of all other political oppositions available. The triumphant clerical faction then are "radical revolutionaries or reactionary radicals"—radical in ending the Pahlavi dynasty, reactionary or traditional in wanting to replace it with "an early Islamic golden age."<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Pesaran argues that "the February Revolution came about not because of a sudden and dramatic Islamic resurgence, but largely as a result of socio-economic conditions.... Islamic resurgence was not the cause of the February Revolution, it was its effect."<sup>22</sup> The basis of this line of reasoning is to note what the revolution was *against* (the shah's dictatorship) rather than what it turned out to be *for* (an Islamic Republic). Moghadam seconds this approach, observing that the revolution was "a populist, anti-imperialist social revolution," and that Islamization set in *after* the revolutionary takeover, following a year and a half of intense political, ideological and social struggles.<sup>23</sup>

A third strategy of analysis has been to combine the ideological, political and economic factors as causes of the revolution, as in Michael Fischer's classic statement: "The causes of the revolution, and its timing, were economic and political; the form of the revolution, and its pacing, owed much to the tradition of religious protest."<sup>24</sup> Moghadam is even more explicit about this multi-causal approach: "The roots of the Islamic Revolution are varied and complex—involving economic, political, and cultural factors, historical and conjunctural causes, internal social pressures and external developments—and cannot be reduced to any one dimension."<sup>25</sup> The works of Keddie, Halliday, Burke and Lubeck, and Bashiriyeh evince this flexibility, with varying degrees of depth and points of

<sup>20</sup> Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 21. See also his *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 427.

<sup>21</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, "Iran's Turbaned Revolution," pp. 83-106 in David H. Partington, editor, *The Middle East Annual. Issues and Events*, volume 1 (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1982), 84. The argument that Islam filled a political vacuum has been advanced by numerous observers, among whom are Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 20, and the perceptive essay by Ahmad Ashraf and Ali Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization in the Iranian Revolution," pp. 3-40 in *State, Culture and Society*, volume 1, number 3 (1985), 9.

<sup>22</sup> Pesaran, "Economic Development," 271, 288.

<sup>23</sup> Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 4; Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 501.

<sup>24</sup> Fischer, *Iran*, 190.

<sup>25</sup> Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 8.

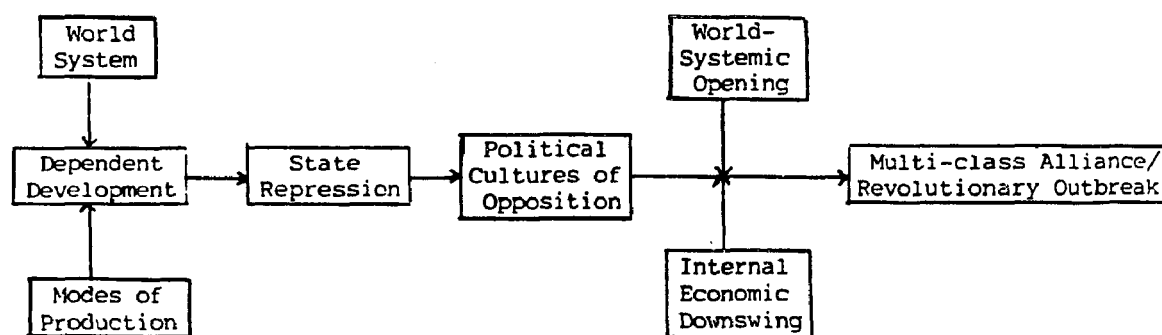
emphasis. Thus Keddie notes the combination of economic problems and cultural uprooting, Halliday the conjuncture of "modern" economic development and "traditional" fundamentalist Islam, and Bashiriyeh the coincidence of economic crisis, religious organization and political mistakes.<sup>26</sup> These analyses come closest to my own analytic strategy. Once we have acknowledged the multi-causal aspects of the revolution, however, the challenge becomes one of explaining *how* economy, politics and ideology are inter-related, and where the several causes come from.

**A synthetic perspective.** The heterogeneity of the social forces that made the Iranian Revolution has been noted by many observers. In this respect the events of 1977-79 follow the pattern of an urban, multi-class populist alliance which we have already discerned in our study of the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11 and Mussadiq's oil nationalization movement in 1951-53. The precise nature of the revolutionary coalition will be explored below. Here we want to specify a theoretical model of how it coalesced.

In Chapter Eight we traced out a pattern of dependent development and state repression of society in terms of the combination of world-systemic constraints and internal modes of production. This process resulted in severe economic dislocation and/or political repression of numerous social classes and groups—the ulama, bazaar merchants and artisans, working class, intelligentsia and students, urban marginal classes, peasants and tribes. The Pahlavi state and its chief supporter, the United States, came to be widely perceived as the cause of Iran's problems. This resulted from the distillation of the experiences of the several groups and classes filtered through the available political cultures—varieties of Islam, secular nationalism and Marxist analyses. Thus a broad coalition was both possible and ready to emerge when in 1977-78 an internal economic downturn occurred simultaneously with an easing of world-systemic pressure signalled by the Carter administration's ambivalent and conflicted relationship with the shah. Diagram 9.1 illustrates the sequence of factors which touched off the revolution.

<sup>26</sup> See Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 177; Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 189-91; Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution in Iran*, 1, 84, 121-22; and Burke and Lubeck, "Explaining Social Movements," 664.

Diagram 9.1



Before progressing to the analysis of the events themselves in light of this framework, I would like to point out one theoretical study that anticipates somewhat the present one, and an empirical study of Iran that comes close to identifying the same elements. Walter Goldfrank's essay on theories of revolution and the Mexican case argues for "a conception that puts together the world-system, the state, and class conflict":

Logically, we need a conception that brings together elements which by themselves are insufficient conditions. That is, "x", "y", and "z" may be necessary conditions but will not be sufficient conditions unless they occur simultaneously or in a particular sequence.... Four conditions appear to be necessary and sufficient, although as these conditions interact and overlap with one another, it is difficult to say exactly where one leaves off and another begins. For any particular national society, they are: 1) a tolerant or permissive world context; 2) a severe political crisis paralyzing the administrative and coercive capacities of the state; 3) widespread rural rebellion; and 4) dissident elite political movements.<sup>27</sup>

If one realizes that under dissident elite political movements, Goldfrank discusses urban uprisings and ideological developments, we have a model conceptually and epistemologically quite close to the one I have presented, that fits Iran rather well, except for the lack of widespread rural rebellion. The fact that the Mexican Revolution, and, as I will argue in my conclusion, the Nicaraguan Revolution, fits this pattern is quite suggestive indeed for the prospect of formulating a new theory of Third World revolutions.

<sup>27</sup> Walter L. Goldfrank, "Theories of Revolution and Revolution Without Theory: The Case of Mexico," pp. 135-165 in *Theory and Society*, volume 7 (1979), 148.

Finally, in one of his articles (although not elsewhere) Fred Halliday comes fairly close to my own views on Iran: "The main reason why the revolution occurred was that conflicts generated in capitalist development intersected with resilient institutions and popular attitudes which resisted the transformation process."<sup>28</sup> He then identifies five main causes of the revolution: 1) rapid and uneven capitalist development, 2) the political weakness of the monarchy, 3) the broad coalition of opposition forces, 4) the mobilizing role of the Islamic religion, and 5) the ambivalent international context. This is a list of factors very similar to my own, and I would only add that one must provide an explanation of where these factors came from, a theoretical framework that shows their origins in dependent development.

## II. The 1963 Uprising: A Precursor

The utility of the model proposed can be partly illustrated by considering a negative example: the failed social movements of 1960-63 culminating in the June 1963 Muharram uprising that was violently repressed by the shah. Consideration of these events and the positions taken by the participants also provides the necessary baseline for measuring the subsequent changes that occurred in political culture and class coalitions in the 1960s and 1970s.

As noted briefly in Chapter Eight serious economic problems developed in 1958-60—a budget deficit, foreign borrowing, bad harvests, and rising inflation. Compounded by an International Monetary Fund stabilization program, these resulted in a fairly deep recession, which hit domestic trade, including the bazaar, the hardest.<sup>29</sup> There followed the fraudulent majlis elections of 1960 which the shah was compelled to cancel and annul, and in April 1961 the court's appointment of the liberal politician 'Ali Amini as prime minister in the midst of firm U.S. pressure for reforms. Internal pressure on the shah was meanwhile accumulating since the August 1960 revival of the remnants of Mussadiq's National Front, led by the Iran Party's Karim Sanjabi, National Party's Dariush Furuhar, Shapur Bakhtiar, Allahyar Saleh, Baqir Kazemi, and the new Liberation Movement of Iran's Mehdi

<sup>28</sup> Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 193.

<sup>29</sup> Pesaran, "Economic Development," 275-77; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 421-22.

Bazargan and Mahmud Taliqani, the progressive cleric. Throughout 1961 and 1962 this loosely organized coalition criticized the shah and Amini and supported a series of strikes and protests by students, teachers, textile, oil and communications workers. The National Front never came to an agreement with Amini despite both sides' support of land reform, because Amini wanted to push this through without any majlis to obstruct it, whereas the National Front's politicians demanded new elections. This helped the shah force Amini's resignation in July 1962. The shah then claimed the land reform issue for himself by proclaiming it the cornerstone of his "White Revolution." The National Front meanwhile lost momentum due to arrests of its leaders, and alienation of both potential left-wing supporters such as Khalil Maliki's Socialist League and the religious liberals of the Liberation Movement.<sup>30</sup>

The third party to this struggle was the ulama, led until his death in March 1961 by Ayatullah Burujirdi. Burujirdi had been apolitical and thus de facto publically supportive of the shah in the 1950s, averring in 1960 that "I pray day and night for the person of the Shah-in-Shah, for whom I entertain sincere regard."<sup>31</sup> This attitude changed with the state's first land reform proposal in 1960, which was firmly opposed by Ayatullahs Burujirdi and Bihbihani as contrary to Islamic law's sanction of private property. When the issue was revived by the government in 1962 leading ayatullahs such as Gulpaigani, Khunsari, Hakim, Mar'ashi-Najafi, Tunakabuni and Amuli continued to oppose it. Ayatullah Shari'atmadari, who was favorable to distribution of vaqf land to peasants, and Taliqani, who claimed that the landlord-peasant relationship had no basis in Islamic law, were in a distinct minority.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> On the events of 1961-62 see Diba, *Mohammad Mossadegh*, 193, 209; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 213-18; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 460-61; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 206-11; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 151-55; and Willem M. Floor, "The Revolutionary Character of the Iranian Ulama: Wishful Thinking or Reality?" pp. 501-524 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 12, number 4 (December 1980), 505-508, 510-11.

<sup>31</sup> Burujirdi is quoted by Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 222 note 7. See also Floor, "The Revolutionary Character," 503-4, with reference to Avery, *Modern Iran*, 481.

<sup>32</sup> On the ulama and land reform, see Floor, "The Revolutionary Character," 509-10; Ashraf, "Iran," 218-25; Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 93-94, 222 note 9; and Keddie, "Religion, Society and Revolution," 392-93 note 17.

By early 1963, however, with the receding significance of the National Front and secular opposition, and the emergence of new leadership among the ulama after Burujirdi's death, the ulama were thrust into positions of leadership in a diffuse struggle against the shah. While conservative ulama continued to oppose the land reform, and liberal democratic ulama such as Shari'atmadari and Milani were not against land reform but wanted the shah to rule constitutionally through a majlis, a new radical current led by Khomeini, with support from Taleqani and others broadened the issue by opposing the shah's autocracy and corruption, and ties to foreigners that were exploiting the country. One regressive demand on which most of the ulama agreed was opposition to women's suffrage. Thus most of the ulama came together to oppose the shah, though for widely varying reasons. The most outspoken of the ulama in late 1962 and early 1963 was the rising figure of Khomeini:

He denounced the regime for living off corruption, rigging elections, violating the constitutional laws, stifling the press and the political parties, destroying the independence of the university, neglecting the economic needs of merchants, workers, and peasants, undermining the country's Islamic beliefs, encouraging *gharbzadegi*—indiscriminate borrowing from the West—granting "capitulations" to foreigners, selling oil to Israel, and constantly expanding the size of the central bureaucracies.<sup>33</sup>

Ulama confrontation with the state came to a head in the spring and summer of 1963. The government passed its referendum on the White Revolution reforms decisively in late January, despite National Front calls for a boycott. A month later the vote was granted to women. Around New Year's (March 21), ulama-led demonstrations in several cities, especially Qum where the main seminary is located, resulted in serious clashes with the state security forces, with many casualties. Tension rose to a fever pitch as the Islamic mourning days of Muharram approached in early June. Khomeini continued to denounce the shah's tyranny, collaboration with Israel and subordination to the United States. On June 4, the tenth of Muharram anniversary of the seventh-century Shi'i Imam Husain's martyrdom, Khomeini and Ayatullah Qumi were arrested before dawn, charged with planning disturbances. Their arrest certainly led to demonstrations, which began that day and affected Tehran, Qum, Tabriz, Shiraz, Isfahan, Mashhad and Kashan. Protests were centered in the bazaar

<sup>33</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 425. On the disparate currents within the ulama in this period, see Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 101; Jazani, *Capitalism and Revolution*, 64; Floor, "The Revolutionary Character," 509-10; and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 227, 358-59.

areas. According to Katouzian, "small traders, shopkeepers and artisans, students, workers, the unemployed, and political activists" participated.<sup>34</sup> Though the shah is said to have wavered, prime minister 'Alam ordered General Uvaisi to fire on the crowds; total casualties over several days were estimated at less than 90 by the government, but several thousand by observers. Martial law, mass arrests and a number of executions further quelled the continuation of the movement. Khomeini was released from prison in August, kept under house arrest from October 1963 to May 1964 for calling for a boycott of elections, and exiled to Turkey in November 1964 for denouncing the granting of diplomatic immunity to American military personnel.

In analyzing these events, certain similarities with the 1977-79 revolution may be noted, as well as some key differences. The similarities lie mainly in the background to each uprising—an economic downturn preceded each, and the shah, with American prompting, responded with reforms. After this, however, patterns diverged. The state controlled events in 1961-63, reacting to its challenges more adroitly than in 1978. The economic downturn was reversed by 1962, muting the grievances that would be expressed in 1963. By making the fairly popular notion of a land reform its own, the state undercut the National Front's demands and made the ulama look more reactionary. Nor was the United States a strong focus of resentment in 1963, having encouraged the land reform and not yet received the immunity for its personnel which came a year later. The state, then, responded with seemingly effective reform programs, in addition to the massive repression of June 1963.

By then the populist alliance was no longer strong or united. The working class had engaged only in scattered strikes in 1961-62 and no general strike occurred in 1963. Maliki's socialists were spurned by the National Front, and the Tudeh had been virtually destroyed inside the country in the 1950s. The National Front and ulama did not work together, divided on the issues of land reform and votes for women. Nor did they have a well-articulated political culture of opposition to draw on

<sup>34</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 228. On these events, see *ibid.*; Floor, "The Revolutionary Character," 511-16; Ashraf, "Iran," 222-23, 235; Algar, "Introduction" to Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, 16-17, and 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Fischer, *Iran*, 124, 188; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 426; Ghoreishi interview, tape 2: 27; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 158-59; and Ghandchi-Tehrani, "Bazaaris and Clergy," 148-49.

at this point, with demands stopping well short of the overthrow of the regime or structural economic changes. The protest movement was neither sustained nor widespread as a result; reforms divided and confused the opposition, repression crushed the leadership and discouraged its social base.

In terms, then, of diagram 9.1, dependent capitalist development was not far advanced, state repression was somewhat mitigated by reforms, and political cultures of opposition were weaker and less articulated. Thus when the world-system opening (U.S. pressure for reforms) and internal economic downturn occurred in 1960-61, the multi-class alliance did not swing into gear. The result was an uprising rather than a revolutionary rupture. These factors would be arrayed rather differently by the mid-1970s, as dependent development sharpened class grievances and made the United States and shah more vulnerable targets. The interim period also witnessed the elaboration of several potent political cultures of opposition, notably radical varieties of Islam and Marxist guerrilla groups. These developments then set the stage for the Iranian Revolution.

### III. The New Multi-Class Populist Alliance Emerges

The articulation of new political cultures of opposition to the shah in the 1970s forms a crucial background to the understanding of the Iranian Revolution. A new version of the populist multi-class alliance in the making can be discerned through study of the several cultures of opposition, the organizations that espoused them, and the underlying grievances of classes and groups that fed them. My hope is to fashion a truly dialectical account of social change, bringing together economics and culture to explain politics.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Trimberger's judgment on E. P. Thompson's account of the English working class: "It made itself by using its cultural inheritance to react to economic transformations and political events": Ellen Kay Trimberger, "E. P. Thompson: Understanding the Process of History," pp. 211-243 in Theda Skocpol, editor, *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 224.

### III.A. Political Cultures of Opposition

Several social scientists have provided useful clues for the study of Iranian Shi'ism. Thus anthropologists Michael Fischer and Henry Munson bid us to look at Islam as a symbolic structure that generates meanings for people, consisting of a language with various inflections (determined by class or social status), an ethos telling people how they should act, and a world view capable of providing answers to human problems.<sup>36</sup> Another general approach is Skocpol's stress on a historically grounded analysis of both organization—the loose but effective network of ulama—and belief—especially symbols of opposition and resistance to domestic tyranny and foreign domination—as resources that were mobilized to make the revolution.<sup>37</sup> Each of these perspectives is consonant with my own, which sees political cultures of opposition as generated by the efforts of numerous actors and groups of actors to interpret their political economic situation in light of the existing cultural elements available to them, and to refashion ideology and culture to bring these into line with their lived experience. This grants considerable autonomy to the domain of culture both as a filter of experience and forum of struggle, and also links it to the political and economic dimensions of society. In the case of Iran, this led to several varieties of Islamic political culture and discourse—Khumaini's militant Islam, 'Ali Shari'ati's radical Islam, the liberal Islam of Mehdi Bazargan and the Liberation Movement of Iran—as well as the secular political cultures of liberal-nationalist constitutionalism and Marxism, embodied in the National Front and the guerrilla groups.

**Khumaini and his associates: militant Islam.** Ayatullah Ruhullah Musavi Khumaini (born September 24, 1902) emerged as the undisputed leader of the Iranian Revolution in the course of 1978. Though politically aware and critical of the government for much of his adult life, the 1963 events marked a turning point in his opposition to the regime's despotism and American power in Iran.<sup>38</sup> In speeches against the majlis decision to grant American personnel diplomatic immunity in

<sup>36</sup> Fischer, *Iran*, 4, 8, 136; and Henry Munson, 1980 lectures on the Iranian Revolution, University of California, Santa Barbara. One may also consult Henry Munson, Jr., *Islam and Revolution in the Middle East* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

<sup>37</sup> Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam," 272-75.

<sup>38</sup> Some sources on Khumaini's life and writings up to 1963, which are beyond the scope of the present compressed account, include Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran" and his "Introduction" to Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 424-25, 476; Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 205-6; Fischer, *Iran*, 152, 164; and Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 59, 79 note 29.

1964 he stated:

Until recently, the British enslaved the Moslem nations; now they are under American bondage....

Large capitalists from America are pouring into Iran to enslave our people in the name of the largest foreign investment... This is the result of the political and economic exploitation by the West on the one hand... and the submission of the regime to colonialism on the other.... The regime is bent on destroying Islam and its sacred laws. Only Islam and the Ulama can prevent the onslaught of colonialism.<sup>39</sup>

Khumaini rose in stature as a result of his opposition in 1963-64 and subsequent exile to Iraq. His 1971 work *Vilayat-i Faqih: Hukumat-i Islami* (Guidance by Religious Experts: Islamic Government) wrought an ideological revolution in that it directly challenged the legitimacy of monarchy and advocated direct rule by qualified Islamic jurists. Arguing that "Islam knows neither monarchy nor dynastic succession,"<sup>40</sup> Khumaini went on to the justification of Islamic authority:

The Islamic government we want will be constitutional and not despotic. But it will be constitutional not in the usual sense of the term—that laws will be made by an elected parliament. It will be constitutional in that the state will strictly observe the rules and regulations laid down in the Koran, in the Sunna, and in the Islamic shari'a....

Since the rule of Islam is the rule of law, only the jurists, and no one else, should be in charge of the government. They are the ones who can undertake what the Prophet intended. They are the ones who can govern as God ordered....

The jurist should have authority over the state administration and over the machinery for spreading justice, providing security, and dispensing just social relations. The jurist possesses the knowledge to ensure the people's liberty, independence, and progress.<sup>41</sup>

Abrahamian notes that these views of Khumaini's were not widely known or disseminated outside theological circles in the 1970s. Instead, Khumaini criticized the regime for its corruption, arms expenditures, relations with the West, decay of agriculture, creation of shantytowns, phony elections and violations of the constitution. He promised Islamic solutions to all these problems, but in a general and unspecified manner.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> These passages of Khumaini's are found in Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 60-61. To the first ellipsis the text is from the 1964 speech on American immunity (for this whole speech, see Floor, "The Revolutionary Character," 521-24); the rest of the text comes from a compilation of his letters and speeches published in 1973, so the exact date is unclear.

<sup>40</sup> This quote is from the 1971 Najaf edition of *Hukumat-i Islami*, as translated by Richard in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 207.

<sup>41</sup> These are composite quotes from the 1976 edition (no publishing information) of *Vilayat-i Faqih: Hukumat-i Islami*, 52-53, 93, 190, as translated by Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 478, 477.

<sup>42</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 445, 478-79, 532.

The result was a militant oppositional stance toward the shah and Western influence in Iran, which Keddie and Moghadam have characterized as "populist" for its combination of progressive and traditional elements, and its appeal to diverse social strata.<sup>43</sup> Though Khomeini's primary social base was among lower-rank ulama, theology students, bazaar merchants and artisans, his anti-imperialism attracted secular intellectuals, leftists and workers as well, and his religious idiom was popular among the urban and rural marginal populations whom he extolled as the *mustazafin* (the dispossessed masses).<sup>44</sup> The uncompromising consistency of his opposition while in exile, his personal piety, simplicity and austere life-style, and the political astuteness of the issues he made his own, further helped Khomeini emerge as the dominant leader of the opposition as the revolution began. He was given crucial organizational support through the existence of a network of his former students inside and outside Iran, including ayatullahs Husain Muntazari, Muhammad Bihishti, Murtaza Mutahhari, Muhammad Javad Bahonar, Sadiq Khalkhali and Anvari, and hojjat al-Islams (a lower theological rank than ayatullah) Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani and 'Ali Khamenei. Most of these were members of the Ruhaniyan-i Mubarez (Organization of Militant Ulama), formed by the late 1960s/early 1970s to preach and spread Khomeini's messages. In all, Khomeini had educated hundreds of individuals who rose in the ranks of the ulama over the many years he taught in Iran up to 1965. The resumption of Iranian pilgrimages to the Shi'i shrine cities of Iraq in 1976 facilitated communications and the distribution of resources for the struggle. When the revolution broke out in 1978, then, Khomeini was prepared with a militant ideology and resilient organization to eventually assume the leadership of it.<sup>45</sup>

**'Ali Shari'ati: radical Islam.** 'Ali Shari'ati (1933-1977) is considered, along with Khomeini, the chief ideologue of the Iranian Revolution. Brought up by a politically aware and devout father in

<sup>43</sup> Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective," 590-91, 596; Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 6-8.

<sup>44</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 532-33; Keddie, "Religion, Society, and Revolution," 393 note 20; Bill, "Power and religion," 42-43.

<sup>45</sup> On the network of resistance and its constituent personalities, I have drawn on Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 475; Algar, 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Ann K. S. Lambton, "A Reconsideration of the Position of the *Marja' al-Taqlid* and the Religious Institution," pp. 115-135 in *Studia Islamica*, volume 20 (1964), 130; Halliday, *Iran*, 218; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 242; and Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 238.

the more open atmosphere of 1941-53, he went in 1960 to the Sorbonne on a fellowship, where he studied sociology, history and literature, and was influenced by Fanon, Sartre and the Algerian Revolution. Returning to Iran in 1964, he taught high school English and then history at the University of Mashhad, but was suspended in 1971 for his politics. He then went permanently to Tehran where he had been giving vastly popular lectures at the Husainiya-i Irshad, an institution associated with the Liberation Movement of Iran. Between 1972 and 1977 he was harassed, imprisoned for 18 months and later kept under house arrest. Finally he was allowed to go to England, where he died in June 1977, possibly of a heart attack, or, as was widely believed, the victim of SAVAK foul play.<sup>46</sup>

Shari'ati's work as a whole can be characterized as an attempt to construct a radical, activist Islam informed by politics and sociological analysis.<sup>47</sup> He distinguished revolutionary Shi'ism (the religion of Imam 'Ali in the seventh century) from official state Shi'ism (what he called "Safavid Shi'ism"), thereby clearly differentiating the few progressive clerics from the many quietist ulama who accepted the monarchy. In a similar vein he refashioned the Karbala paradigm of the martyrdom of 'Ali's son Husain into a theology of liberation extolling mass struggle against injustice and heroic sacrifice for an ideal, arguing: "Islam's most basic tradition is martyrdom, and human activity, mixed with a history of struggle against oppression and establishment of justice and protection of human rights."<sup>48</sup> This laid more groundwork for making the already emotionally-charged month of Muharram a period of powerful potential for political expression.

Shari'ati also combatted Western political cultural influence on Iran, including cultural borrowing, bourgeois democracy and to some degree, Marxism, holding up his revolutionary version of Islam as a comprehensive world view superior to all of these. The responsibility of the intellectual

<sup>46</sup> For details of Shari'ati's life I have relied on Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 215-16; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 464-66; and Brad Hanson, "The 'Westoxication' of Iran: Depictions and Reactions of Behrangi, Āl-e Ahmad, and Shari'ati," pp. 1-23 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 15, number 1 (February 1983), 13.

<sup>47</sup> On Shari'ati's ideas generally, in addition to the specific passages cited in this and the next paragraph, I have drawn on Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Fischer, *Iran*, 165-70; Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 216-19; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 466-67; and Suroosh Irfani, *Iran's Islamic Revolution: Popular Liberation or Religious Dictatorship?* (London: Zed Books, Ltd., 1983), ix.

<sup>48</sup> 'Ali Shari'ati, *From Where Shall We Begin? & The Machine in the Captivity of Mechanism*, translated from the Persian by Fatollah Marjani (Houston: Free Islamic Literatures, Inc., 1980), 30. On the significance of the Karbala paradigm, see Fischer, *Iran*, 13-21, 134, 175-77, 213-15.

was to identify the ills of his or her society and suggest solutions in keeping with its culture, which in Iran meant Islam. Thus poverty, foreign cultural and economic domination, and internal tyranny are to be condemned.<sup>49</sup> While Marxism too was seen as a product of the West, there is also Shari'ati's admiration for Fanon, Sartre and Che Guevara while in Paris, and before that, his affiliation along with his father in the Movement of God-Fearing Socialists. He recognized Marxism's utility for understanding society and history, but felt Islam held the answers to the problems thus identified.<sup>50</sup> He placed more faith in critical and independent intellectuals than dogmatic Marxists or status-quo ulama. Western democracy too was criticized as corrupt and unsuited to Iran; more vaguely than Khomeini, Shari'ati called for an Islamic government—a kind of popular, but “directed” democracy. Denying the ulama the exclusive right to rule, he yet foreshadowed Khomeini's leadership by holding that the community should choose a leader and invest him with substantial power.<sup>51</sup>

In terms of a social base for these ideas, Shari'ati served as a bridge from Khomeini and the ulama to university students and intellectuals, and through them to other urban classes such as workers, urban marginals and migrants. He also inspired the Mujahidin guerrilla group's revolutionary Islam. Thus, as Keddie notes, Shari'ati “attracted liberal and radical elements to Islam who in the past, and possibly in the future, might be attracted to more secular radicalism.”<sup>52</sup> During the revolutionary year of 1978 his “books” (transcriptions of his many lectures) were sold openly in the university and bazaar, and his portrait appeared on walls and in demonstrations with a frequency second only to Khomeini's. Slogans taken from his writings—“The martyr is the heart of history!”, “Every day is ‘Ashura; every place is Karbala!”—were inscribed on banners in the street processions.<sup>53</sup> Even more than Khomeini, Shari'ati was the main intellectual force behind the revolution.

<sup>49</sup> Shari'ati, *From Where Shall We Begin?*, 20-21, 23-24, 27-28, 34, 44, 47, 51.

<sup>50</sup> Shari'ati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*, 49 (this title, incidentally, is not Shari'ati's but rather is the coinage of the editor, Hamid Algar); Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 464-64, 467-70; Hanson, “The ‘Westoxication’ of Iran,” 15-16.

<sup>51</sup> See the passages cited by Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 221, 224; Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 71; and Hanson, “The ‘Westoxication’ of Iran,” 18.

<sup>52</sup> Keddie, “Religion, Society, and Revolution,” 34.

<sup>53</sup> See Algar's “Preface” to Shari'ati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*, 7-9; and Hanson, “The ‘Westoxication’ of Iran,” 18.

**Mehdi Bazargan and the Liberation Movement: liberal, constitutionalist and nationalist varieties of Islam.** Though not as influential within the mass movement as Khomeini and Shari'ati, the liberal ulama and lay thinkers associated with the Liberation (or Freedom) Movement of Iran (Nahzat-i Azadi-yi Iran) did fashion a new political culture in the 1960s and 1970s which had repercussions during the revolution, including the rise of one of its founders, Mehdi Bazargan, to the prime ministership in 1979. Bazargan (born 1905) may be taken as its most representative figure. Educated in Paris in the 1930s, he returned to Iran in 1936 and worked at the National Bank, then taught thermonuclear physics at Tehran University. He headed the oil nationalization committee in 1951 and was close to Mossadegh. As early as 1962 Bazargan advocated democratic struggle against corrupt government by an Islamically informed and motivated populace. He is regarded as the founder of Islamic modernism in Iran, based on the compatibility of Islam and scientific rationality, and the continuing relevance of Islam to the problems of contemporary society. He thus admired Western science and certain social ideals such as democracy and humanism but felt that Islam was in accord with these and must guide politics. He also envisioned a role for leadership by the highest-ranking of the ulama:

The people require of him that he should be like 'Alī, albeit at a lower level; learned and informed; a man ready for the fray, a fighter; a brave and eloquent speaker; a good judge of people; a man who could win the people and carry them with him; an active man who could provide for the needs of his family; a capable administrator; an honest man, wholly committed to God; a leader, well versed in the affairs of religion and the world and in theoretical and practical matters: a man of action as well as words.<sup>54</sup>

We may see in these views of the early 1960s an almost uncanny foreshadowing of Khomeini's later appeal.

The Liberation Movement of Iran was founded in 1961 by Bazargan along with Sayyid Mahmud Taliqani and Yadullah Sahabi. Taliqani (1910-1979) was its most eminent religious personality. A supporter of Mossadegh, he was periodically imprisoned or banished from Tehran for his political positions, sentenced to ten years in 1963 for his pamphlet "The Dictatorship is Again

<sup>54</sup> Bazargan's views, as summarized by Lambton, "A Reconsideration," 124. For Bazargan's life and ideas I have drawn on Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, 111-14; Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 213-15; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 458. There is also a substantial dissertation dealing with the Liberation Movement: Houchang Esfandiari Chehabi, "Modernist Shi'ism and Politics:

Shedding Blood.' His works included praise for the Constitutional Revolution, democracy and socialism within a devout Islamic framework. On economic systems he wrote that Islam did not justify landownership absolutely and that people's needs should also be met. Politically, he wanted to bring progressive ulama and secular forces together, thereby overcoming the weakness and divisions of the Mussadiq era.<sup>55</sup>

Also within the ideological purview of the Liberation Movement were Ayatullah Kazim Shari'atmadari (born 1905) and the lay economist Abul Hassan Bani Sadr (born 1933/34). Just as Taliqani was to the left of Bazargan, Shari'atmadari was a moderate but staunch constitutionalist to his right, with a major following in his native province of Azarbaijan. Not formally a member of the Liberation Movement, he was widely respected for his religious learning (considered higher than Khumaini's) and principled aloofness from the regime.<sup>56</sup> Bani Sadr was born into a family of ayatullahs from Hamadan but studied theology and sociology at the university. He spent the 1960s and 1970s in exile in France where he studied economics and worked with the French Marxist sociologist Paul Vieille. His several books on Islamic government and economics criticize the Pahlavi dynasty as well as quietist ulama, cautioning against personality cults of all kinds and condemning class inequalities. In Richard's estimation his thought exhibits somewhat contradictory tendencies—anarchist and Islamic theoretical categories are deployed to reconcile liberty and Islamic law.<sup>57</sup> Politically on the left, he is perhaps classifiable as a right-wing democratic socialist or a left social democrat, within an Islamic framework.

The Liberation Movement was banned in 1963 but continued to exist, underground and especially abroad. Its social base was similar to that of its secular counterpart, the National Front—the middle strata of merchants, civil servants, students, professionals. Further left, Taliqani personally inspired the Mujahidin guerrillas and was imprisoned for his support of them in mid-1977. Led by religious lay persons, it served as a conduit between religious and secular political cultures. Of the

The Liberation Movement of Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Yale University (1986).

<sup>55</sup> This sketch of Taliqani relies on Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 210-13; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 458-59.

<sup>56</sup> Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 208-9.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-28.

exiles who headed its North American branch in the 1970s, several returned to Iran to assume posts in the Bazargan post-revolutionary government: Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi became foreign minister, Mustafa Chamran defence minister, Sadiq Qutbzadeh minister of National Iranian Radio and Television, and 'Abbas Amir Intazam deputy prime minister.<sup>58</sup> Bani Sadr would become the first president of the Islamic Republic later in 1979.

**Secular political cultural trends and opposition forces.** Under this disparate heading may be grouped certain intellectuals, writers and the scattered remnants of the National Front and Tudeh Party. The range of thinking here, from liberal nationalism to forms of Marxism, is well represented in the works of Jalal Al-i Ahmad and Samad Behrangi. Al-i Ahmad (1923-1969) was the son of a mulla who turned against religion in his youth and joined the Tudeh in 1943; three years later he abandoned the pro-Soviet Tudeh for Maliki's socialist Third Force. Eventually he broke with them too and in the last six years of his short life returned to Islam. A teacher, writer of short stories, and translator of Sartre, Camus, Gide and Dostoevsky, Al-i Ahmad's most important legacy is the 1961 extended essay *Gharbzadigi* (variously translated as "Westoxication," "Westomania," "West-Struckness" or "Occidentosis"). In this essay he attacked the cultural imperialism and technological superiority of the West and Iranian intellectuals' acquiescence to it:

It is not a question of denying or renouncing the machine—never! The universalization of the machine is a historical necessity. The question is our attitude toward the machine and technology and that we are not the makers of the machine, but rather, because of economic and political necessity, we have to be submissive consumers of Western manufactures. At most, we have to be easily contented, submissive, low-waged repairers of what comes from the West, since this in turn necessitates our identification with the machine; not only ourselves, but our government, our culture, and our daily life. Our whole existence has to be tailored to the height and size of the machine. If the person who has made the machine is now rebelling against it and feeling its repressive force, we who have become the servants thereof do not even show signs of complaint. We even put on airs. And this is what I mean by "Westomania." My main contention is that we have not been able to preserve our own original cultural identity in the face of invasion by the machine, but have in fact given way to it completely.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 462-64.

<sup>59</sup> Jalal Al-i Ahmad, *Gharbzadigi*, translated by William G. Millward and Reza Baraheni, in Baraheni's *The Crowned Cannibals*, 81-82. My account of Al-i Ahmad draws on Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions," 594; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 204-5; and Hanson, "The 'Westoxication' of Iran," 7-8, 11-13.

To a certain degree this prefigured Shari'ati's search for an authentic Iranian response to the West, as did Al-i Ahmad's turn to Islam toward the end of his life, ambivalently described in the diary of his 1964 pilgrimage to Mecca. His audience was among committed but politically searching or disaffected intellectuals and university students.

Samad Behrangi (1939-1968) represented a new generation of committed intellectuals. A village school teacher from Azarbaijan, he collected and wrote folktales, and essays on Azarbaijani history, literature and village life. He too criticized cultural domination by the West but from a fully secular standpoint—Iran's intellectuals were too bourgeois, too subservient to America; the educational system was geared for urban middle class students and entirely inappropriate for village children. His writing was popular, down-to-earth, socially conscious and critical of the powers that be, urging resistance to the oppressive conditions that he depicted. Using the folktale form to evade the censor, his world-famous short story *The Little Black Fish* is a chronicle of self-discovery, exploration of one's surroundings, resistance to evil and cruel authorities, and solidarity with one's fellow strugglers. The little black fish claims "I'm neither pessimistic nor afraid ... I speak about everything I see and understand," and in the end dies fighting a heron to "give peace to all fish."<sup>60</sup> Behrangi himself died under somewhat clouded circumstances at age 29 while swimming in the strong Aras River. He inspired left-wing students above all, including members of the Iranian Students Association abroad, and the Fada'ian guerrilla organization carried his picture in the revolution's demonstrations and put it on their posters. Other intellectuals opposed the dictatorship in their life and writing, including the playwright Ghulam Husain Sa'idi and the critic Reza Baraheni. Dozens of them were active in the associations of writers, poets and others that initiated the protests in the fall of 1977.

This brings us to the organizations that loosely drew on these currents to oppose the regime.

The National Front was inactive as such between 1963 or so and December 1977 when it announced

<sup>60</sup> Samad Behrangi, *The Little Black Fish and Other Modern Persian Stories*, translated from the Persian by Eric and Mary Hooglund (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1976), 7, 18. On Behrangi's life and work see Thomas Ricks's introduction to *ibid.*, and Hanson, "The 'Westoxication' of Iran," 2-7.

its re-formation. Already a pale shadow of its 1950-53 peak, it disintegrated further when the 1960-63 movement collapsed. Some members carried on underground.<sup>61</sup> More seriously repressed by the regime were the remnants of the Tudeh Party, which existed primarily in exile from 1953 to 1978, claiming 38,000 members abroad in East and West Europe and North America. Inside Iran, several hundred were arrested between 1964 and the early 1970s, SAVAK managed to infiltrate some cells, and several splits occurred, leading to considerable disillusionment with the party on the left. Its networks abroad did however try to organize against the regime, while in 1978, as we shall see, it proved to have some supporters in the factories and particularly in the oil sector. Its political positions included support for the Soviet Union, calls for a democratic republic, a real land reform, rejection of violence and support for progressive clergy, especially Khomeini.<sup>62</sup>

**Emergence of guerrilla opposition: left-wing groups.** The repression of the Tudeh and demise of the National Front in the 1960s and 1970s left something of a vacuum on the left and secular side of the populist alliance, which would be filled by the emergence of guerrilla groups, Islamic and Marxist. From the mid-1960s onwards, a number of small groups operated briefly or for longer periods, such as the Islamic Nations' Party that assassinated the prime minister in 1965; provincial Islamic groups with names like Allah Akbar (God is Great) and the True Shi'is; small Marxist groups such as the Organization for the People's Ideal; and armed units associated with larger political parties such as the Tufan (Tempest) group, the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Organization of Communist Unity. In all, the minor Islamic groupings lost an estimated 28 members in shoot-outs, executions and by torture, the smaller Marxist groups lost 38 members in these ways.<sup>63</sup>

Towering above all these groups in numbers of members lost, organizational capacity and popular stature were the Islamic Mujahidin and the Marxist Fada'ian organizations. The Mujahidin-i Khalq (People's Crusaders) was founded in the mid-1960s by former members of the Liberation Movement dissatisfied with the strategy of peaceful struggle. Almost all were young students or

<sup>61</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 231, 289.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 233-37, 262, 297; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 451-57.

<sup>63</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 480-82; Halliday, *Iran*, 226-27, 240.

graduates in technical disciplines in Isfahan, Shiraz and Tabriz, as well as Tehran, who at first met in small groups to study the guerrilla experiences of Algeria, Vietnam and the Palestinians. Some trained with the PLO in Jordan. In August 1971 they began military operations to coincide with the shah's 2500th anniversary of the monarchy. In the 1970s they assassinated Iranian General Tahiri, six American colonels and others. Ideologically the Mujahidin began with the Liberation Movement's congruence of Islam and scientific rationality, linking true Islam with revolutionary activity. By 1973 a pamphlet declared their respect for Marxism and argued that imperialism presented a common enemy for Muslims and Marxists. In 1975 an internal split occurred with a Tehran-based faction emerging (later known as Paykar—"Combat") and a provincial Islamic one influenced by Shari'ati retaining the name Mujahidin. The Marxist group sought to work with other left forces and conduct political as well as military actions. In all, the Islamic Mujahidin lost 73 members, the Marxists 30 after 1975, including almost all of the original leadership.<sup>64</sup>

The Fada'ian-i Khalq (People's Devotees) also grew out of several study groups in the mid-1960s, and were similarly dissatisfied with the Tudeh's lack of armed struggle and cognizant of the difficulties of organizing the working class in conditions of state repression. Most early members were university students in the social sciences and humanities; later a few workers joined. On February 8, 1971, after a member was arrested, they attacked a police outpost in the Gilan forests at Siakhal. Later they assassinated several SAVAK, police and military personnel, as well as an industrialist involved in a massacre of workers. Like the Mujahidin their strategy was essentially one of guerrilla actions by small groups designed to build momentum for a wider uprising. Also like the Mujahidin, in 1975-77 they split into two groups, one moving closer to the Tudeh and political organizing, the other remaining more guerrilla-oriented. The Iranian Student Association in the United States was pro-Fada'ian, and had at least 5,000 members and many more supporters in the 1970s. In Iran, the Fada'ian lost 172 members in the 1970s, seven of whom, including the theorist Bizhan Jazani, were murdered in prison.<sup>65</sup> The overall impact of these two major guerrilla

<sup>64</sup> On the Mujahidin, see Halliday, *Iran*, 240, 242; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 238-39; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 480-81, 489-95; and Bashiriye, *The State and Revolution*, 74. I have also drawn on Munson's 1980 lectures on the Iranian Revolution, and Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran."

<sup>65</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 241-42, 246-47; Moghadam, "Socialism or Anti-Imperialism?" 10 note 10; Keddie, *Roots of*

organizations—the Mujahidin and the Fada'ian—was to imbue many students and intellectuals, and some workers, with Marxist and revolutionary ideals, to suggest the vulnerability of the regime to a certain degree, and to create a nucleus of armed members who would be available during the final uprising of February 1979.

### III.B. Class Grievances and Attitudes in the 1970s

In this section we will briefly recapitulate the impact of dependent development on the shaping of the grievances and attitudes of the major social groups and classes by the 1970s. Also documented will be the resources of and actions taken by each in the decade leading up to the outbreak of revolutionary activity in 1977.

While many—perhaps most—of the 180,000-strong ulama remained quietist and conservative, a new generation that was more progressive and modern in outlook emerged. Moreover, almost all the ulama had some grievance against the government, over the latter's control of education, law, welfare and waqf properties, or the imposition of urban development at the expense of the bazaar, sending of a religious corps into the countryside, unilateral installation of a monarchic calendar, supervision of theological publications, or changes in the family law. The deep cuts in subsidies to the ulama in 1977 were widely felt and resented. Coupled with this came repression in the form of numerous arrests and a few cases of torture and murder of oppositional ulama. Despite this onslaught, the ulama retained some valuable resources, collecting the religious taxes especially in the bazaar, running mosques and meeting halls, operating seminaries, setting up Islamic societies and libraries in universities and in the provinces. Shocked at the moral decay of society, they sent preachers into the shanty-towns, and organized prayer meetings, funeral processions and passion plays, all of which laid groundwork for further mobilization when the time came.<sup>66</sup>

*Revolution*, 237, 239; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 480-89.

<sup>66</sup> On the ulama in the 1970s, see Richard, in Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 213; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 433, 445, 473-75, 535; Halliday, *Iran*, 19, 218-19; Fischer, *Iran*, 109; Bill, "Power and Religion," 24-25; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 187; Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 194; Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 25-26; Keddie, "Religion, Society, and Revolution," 32; Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 11; Moghadam, "Socialism or Anti-Imperialism?" 13; Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 73-74, 82 note 93; and Muslim Students Following the Line of the Imam, *Asnad-i lanah-i jasusi-yi Amrika* [Documents from the Spy Nest of America] (Tehran?: n.d.), volume 12, part 2: 35; volume 7: 52.

The educated middle class—the intelligentsia in its broad sense—grew with the processes of urbanization, industrialization and expansion of the state and education. Intellectuals were needed by the state, but in their capacity as critics they often came to oppose it too. Teachers, technicians, skilled workers, office clerks all grew in number, but received no political rights or responsibilities. Many wanted democratization, greater participation in society and social reforms. Others, following Al-i Ahmad and Shari'ati, turned to Islam (some have seen in this a natural synthesis of the opportunity for modern education among the children of the traditionally religious bazaar classes). Students, including those abroad, were particularly likely to be radical in outlook, both from a left-wing and an Islamic point of view. Major student protests occurred in 1969, 1970 (against foreign influence in Iran), 1971, 1975 and autumn 1977 (for political liberalization). Writers, poets, lawyers and other professional groups emerged in the mid- to late 1970s and would touch off the revolution in the fall of 1977.<sup>67</sup>

The same processes of dependent development had expanded the size of the working class. Scattered strikes began to occur in the late 1960s and early 1970s: There were at least 25 major strikes from 1974 to 1976, ending with a combination of repression and concessions, arrests and pay raises. Wages rose but grievances remained—difficult working conditions, political repression of the labor movement, a deteriorating urban environment, inflation, and in 1977, growing unemployment as recession set in. Radical ideas were particularly prevalent among northern workers in Gilan and Mazandaran with their history of opposition and organization. Working class culture more commonly was an amalgam of religious beliefs and an intuitive understanding based on the experience of exploitation. Many may have aspired to own their own shop or small business, but the political economy of dependent development ensured that few could realize this ideal.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> See Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 336-37; Hooglund, "Rural Participation in the Revolution," 6; Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 17; Muslim Students, *Asnad-i lanah-i jasusi*, volume 25: 100; Fischer, *Iran*, 188, 240-41; Syrous Abbasi, "Radicalization of Leftist Youth in Iran," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Government, Florida State University (1981), 164; Halliday, *Iran*, 224-25; and Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 74-75.

<sup>68</sup> On the working class, see Fischer, *Iran*, 188; Halliday, *Iran*, 206-8; Ivanov, *Tarikh-i Nuvin-i Iran*, 300-305; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 46-51; and Val Moghadam, "Industrial Development, Culture and Working-Class Politics: A Case Study of Tabriz Industrial Workers in the Iranian Revolution," pp. 151-175 in *International Sociology*, volume 2, number 2 (June 1987), 161, 162 table 3.

The merchants and artisans of the bazaar, while distinct classes and stratified internally, shared broad common grievances by the 1970s. Each more than half a million strong, they clung tenaciously to their niches in the new political economy as foreign imports and Iranian manufactures partially replaced them and sought alternative distribution outlets. The state discriminated against them with its credit and oil policies, controlled the guilds, and blamed the bazaar for inflation in the harsh anti-profiteering campaign of 1975-76, which led to thousands of arrests and fines. The shah and foreign capital were thus clearly perceived as threats to their livelihood, and the bazaar classes fought back by retaining their own information networks, banking systems, religious discussion groups and traditions of social solidarity. They funded the ulama heavily to pursue similar projects. Children of these classes often received secular educations which exposed them to social problems and techniques of criticism. Merchants, by virtue of their higher class position, were not revolutionary in outlook, while artisans often aspired only to become masters of their own shops. But both would furnish the backbone of the pro-Khumaini movement, responding to his populist religious idiom and contributing significant organizational and financial resources to the revolution. The formation in late 1977 of a Society of Merchants, Traders and Craftsmen in the Tehran bazaar formed part of the first act of the revolution.<sup>69</sup>

Turning now to the most oppressed classes in Iranian society, the ranks of the urban marginals swelled into the millions in the 1970s, and while wages rose and job opportunities were created, especially in the construction sector, the urban underclasses faced insuperable difficulties of low incomes, abominable housing, malnutrition, slim educational chances and the like. The construction sector entered a recession in 1976-77, so just when the cost of living took off, jobs became even scarcer. Shanty-town dwellers were often quite religious in outlook, in contact with the local mosque and mulla, organized in their own religious circles, and provided for their own mutual solidarity. Though they might see secular oppositionists as intellectual egg-heads and *kravatis* ("tie-wearers"),

<sup>69</sup> On merchants and artisans in the 1970s, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 433, 443-44, 498-500, 533; Floor, "The Guilds in Iran," 115; Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 24-25; Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 66-67; Ghandchi-Tehrani, "Bazaaris and Clergy," 103-4, 119-20; Halliday, *Iran*, 219-20; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 336-37; Moghadam, "Industrial Development," 161; and Zavarcei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 177.

their children were sometimes radicalized in the educational system, where some became leftists and others followers of Shari'ati's radical Islam. They themselves were painfully cognizant of the great inequalities in urban social structure, and resentment toward the wealthy, and above all the shah, naturally grew. When the state tried to evict them from their shanties in 1977, slum dwellers fought back in actions that took their place as part of the early signs of the revolution.<sup>70</sup>

Peasants and tribespeople were, as in the past, marginalized economically but faced barriers to political participation—chiefly control of tribespeople, the persistence of landed power and the new state control in the countryside, the scattered locations of rural communities, coupled with illiteracy, poverty and other factors worked against both groups. Peasants did develop considerable complaints against the state, however, as the land reform failed to deliver better lives for the majority of tenants and landless families. Hostility and passive resistance to authority permeated many villages. Iran's seven million tribespeople developed their own grievances in terms of forced settlement policies, military repression, the spread of capitalist production relations, growing poverty, and linguistic and ethnic discrimination. There is some evidence of growing class consciousness within tribes as well. Further, those rural people of both classes who migrated to the cities in such large numbers became part of the urban marginal classes, sharing both their situation and the responses to it. Both in villages and urban slums, the peasantry were religious (but often cynical about the ulama), desirous of education, and bitter at the state and upper classes' monopolization of wealth and power. Such feelings were particularly common among youth.<sup>71</sup>

Out of the complex encounter of the political cultures elaborated above—militant, radical and liberal Islam, secular liberalism and Marxism—and the classes and social groups just discussed—ulama, intelligentsia, workers, merchants, artisans, urban marginals and rural classes—emerged a new version of Iran's historic populist alliance. This coalition then touched off a world-historical

<sup>70</sup> See Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 535-36; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 61-93, 125-26; and Halliday, *Iran*, 287.

<sup>71</sup> On the peasantry, see Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 123-37, 171 note 1; Halliday, *Iran*, 213; and Hooglund, "Rural Participation in the Revolution," 5-6. On the tribes, Beck, lecture on "Tribes and the State"; Garthwaite, *Khans and shahs*, 141; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 531; Halliday, *Iran*, 239-40; Beck, "Economic Transformations," 99; and Lois Beck, "Revolutionary Iran and Its Tribal Peoples," pp. 14-20 in *MERIP (Middle East Research and Information Project) Reports*, number 87 (May 1980), 15-16.

revolutionary movement in 1977.

#### IV. The Course of Events

This section will introduce the events of 1977-79 by giving an overview of the key revolutionary moments. While this necessarily involves an analytic strategy, and the reader should keep in mind the account of political cultures and class grievances just sketched, a more analytic discussion will follow in the last section of this chapter, section V.

**Economic recession and liberalization: 1976-77.** Starting in about 1975 and deepening in the course of 1976-77 came the first major economic downswing of the shah's White Revolution since the early 1960s. Just as the 1973-78 investment plan was being revised upwards by 89 percent after the OPEC price increases of 1973-74, the oil boom burst as world demand contracted in 1975 due to a recession caused in part by the high price of oil itself. In Iran, inflation was fueled by the great amounts of oil revenues that had poured into the economy since 1973. Land speculation drove up the price of commercial lots in Tabriz from \$73 a square meter in 1971 to \$660 in 1974. Housing costs reached exorbitant levels as foreigners came to Iran and speculators raised prices while migrants swelled urban populations. Food imports and agricultural failure also pushed up bills. This rise in the cost of living, from 9.9 percent in 1975 to 16.6 percent in 1976 and 25.1 percent in 1977, squeezed any real gains from the wage increases that were being won.<sup>72</sup>

By mid-1977 a recession was in full swing, compounded by prime minister Amuzegar's deflationary policies. Iran was forced to borrow again from Western banks to cover a \$2 billion budget deficit. Budgets were cut, contracts were cancelled, building projects were scaled down or deferred. Oil output reached a plateau as Iran refused to sell at Saudi Arabia's lower prices. Imports slowed as well. It should be noted that in some respects this was more a relative slowdown in growth than an absolute decline. Thus Halliday argues that 1977 saw a slowdown or a recession rather than an actual economic crisis. The non-oil industrial growth rate, for example, dropped from

<sup>72</sup> Graham, *Iran*, 88-89; Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 89-90; Dadkhah, "The Inflationary Process," 389 table 1, calculations mine; "Iran: The New Crisis of American Hegemony," 9-10.

14.1 percent in 1976/77 to 9.4 percent in 1977/78. There was however a real fall in private sector investment in machinery and equipment of 6.8 percent (the first since 1969), and agriculture declined by 0.8 percent. Meanwhile, inflation took its bite, and unemployment became serious at 9.1 percent by 1977-78 (it had been only one percent in 1974), particularly affecting the construction sector's jobs for the working and marginal classes. The closing of some factories and bankruptcies among merchants hurt employment further. Businessmen were hit by higher taxes, bazaar shopkeepers kept getting fined. Capital flight burgeoned to \$2 billion. 1977, too, was the year stipends to the ulama were cut. These negative economic trends would continue on into 1978, as protests grew into revolution.<sup>73</sup>

Simultaneously with this economic recession, the shah's regime was experimenting with a slight liberalization of the political atmosphere. In hopes of relieving middle-class demands for participation, and under pressure from international human rights groups and the new Carter administration, the shah began to tolerate a certain amount of criticism and tone down a few of the most overt excesses of his police state. Some 357 political prisoners were amnestied, torture was "reduced," the Red Cross visited 20 prisons and new laws restricted military courts somewhat. Society's response soon went further than anticipated, a sign of the degree of compression of social forces from 1953 to 1977. A series of open letters were addressed to the government from prominent individuals and groups of intellectuals, including over 100 writers and poets, 54 judges and 144 lawyers. These letters called for implementation of the constitution, extension of human rights and civil liberties, free elections and press freedoms; none were published in Iran, but they circulated from hand to hand. During the spring and summer, the National Front, Liberation Movement of Iran, Tudeh Party, Fada'ian and Mujahidin all agitated publicly. In June and August Tehran slum dwellers protested forcible evictions and a number of people were killed in pitched battles with security forces.

<sup>73</sup> For these recessionary trends see Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions," 588, and *Roots of Revolution*, 234; "Iran: The New Crisis of American Hegemony," 11; Halliday, *Iran*, 145, "The Iranian Revolution," 194, and "The Genesis of the Iranian Revolution," pp. 1-16 in *Third World Quarterly*, volume 1, number 4 (October 1979), 8-9; Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 86, 93, 97-98; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 184; Pesaran, "Economic Development," 286; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 259; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 511; and Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 81.

In the latter month, there were several cases of crowds forming—often high school students—near the Tehran bazaar to protest food prices and shortages. Arson incidents in 130 factories dotted the months from July to October.<sup>74</sup>

SAVAK became more active again in the fall, harassing and beating dissidents (now easier to identify), and resuming secret military tribunals. The death of Khomeini's son Mustafa under mysterious circumstances in Iraq was also attributed to SAVAK. Meanwhile, however, associations of teachers, merchants, writers, lawyers and theology students were formed. In mid-October a series of "cultural nights" were organized by poets and writers at the Goethe Institute in Tehran. These grew over ten days from 3,000 to 15,000 participants who occupied the surrounding streets to listen to verses in praise of freedom, turning the occasions into demonstrations against censorship. A month later thousands attended poetry nights at Aryamehr University, on the last of which clashes occurred with the police, who killed one student and wounded 70 others. By the beginning of December most of Iran's 22 universities were closed or on strike. An Association for the Defense of Freedoms and the Rights of Man was formed and held a public meeting December 12. During the month of Muharram (December) Tehran shopkeepers turned religious gatherings into demonstrations against government economic policy.<sup>75</sup>

The year 1977 thus heralded the start of a mass protest, involving students, intellectuals, workers, urban marginals, ulama and bazaaris at one point or another. Jimmy Carter's celebrated New Year's toast to the shah on January 1, 1978 seems in retrospect a massive misreading of the situation:

Iran is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership and to the respect, admiration and love which your people give to you.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 231-33; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 500-503; Halliday, *Iran*, 289; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 342; Muslim Students, *Asnad-i lanah-i jasusi*, volume 24: 7; Fischer, *Iran*, 189-93; Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 175-76; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 86-89; Bashiriych, *State and Revolution*, 112.

<sup>75</sup> Fischer, *Iran*, 193; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 503-505; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 22-24; Bashiriych, *The State and Revolution*, 112; Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 177-78; Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 6, 27; Jerrold D. Green, *Revolution in Iran. The Politics of Countermobilization* (New York: Praeger, 1982), 153-54.

<sup>76</sup> Algar, "Introduction" to Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution*, 23 note 16, quoting the *New York Times*, January 2, 1978.

A great tidal wave of revolution was preparing to engulf the island of stability, though few recognized the unmistakable groundswells as 1977 ended.

**The revolutionary year: 1978.** On January 7, 1978 the regime made a major mistake. It published an article in the daily newspaper *Ittila'at* which slandered Khumaini as of Indian origins, a "medieval reactionary" with ties to British imperialism, and a writer of love poems with homosexual overtones in his youth. Riots broke out at the newspaper's Tehran office; more seriously, at Qum on January 9, the bazaars and religious seminary closed down and a series of political demands were issued. Four to ten thousand people demonstrated in the streets, and between ten and 70 were killed by police. The revolution had produced its first martyrs, and the ulama, led by Shari'atmadari, attacked the government as non-Islamic. The regime responded with a series of counter-demonstrations at Qum on January 10, at Tabriz and in cities in Khuzistan on January 18-19 and on the anniversary of the White Revolution on January 26, trucking in peasants, civil servants and students for these occasions which were duly reported in the press.<sup>77</sup>

The government was unprepared for the cycle of protests which followed at regular 40-day intervals, to commemorate the deaths of martyrs according to Islamic mourning rituals. Thus on February 18 there were large processions in Qum, Tabriz, Mashhad and nine other cities in honor of those killed on January 9. In Tabriz the police shot a young person, provoking demonstrators to attack banks, liquor stores, pornographic cinemas and Rastakhiz offices—all symbols of the regime and Western influence. The cry "Death to the shah!" was first heard on this occasion, and the army, with tanks, was required to regain control of the city two days later with as many as 100 or more people dead as a result.<sup>78</sup>

These protests continued at regular 40-day intervals throughout the spring. On March 28-30 there were demonstrations in as many as 55 places, which turned violent in several, especially at

<sup>77</sup> For the events of January 1978 I have drawn on Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 24; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 242-43; Fischer, *Iran*, 194-95; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 505; Bashiriye, *The State and Revolution*, 113; and Alidoost-Khaybari, "Religious Revolutionaries," 498-99.

<sup>78</sup> On these events see Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 25; Fischer, *Iran*, 195; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 244; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 344; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 506-507; and Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 179.

Yazd, where thousands of mourners left the mosque to march on the police station, and again, up to a hundred were killed in a confrontation that was tape-recorded and distributed throughout Iran. The government again mobilized a counterdemonstration on April 9 and claimed 300,000 participated. May 6 brought demonstrations in Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Qum, Kashan and Jahrum, which continued through May 10, turning violent in some 34 cities, and resulting in 14-80 deaths (by government and opposition estimates, respectively). Perhaps the most shocking scene occurred when Imperial guards broke into Shari'atmadari's house in Qum mistaking it for that of the more radical Ayatullah Gulpaigani, shooting and killing one of Shari'atmadari's followers, allegedly for refusing to shout "Javad shah!" (Long live the shah). This act undoubtedly turned the cautious, moderate Shari'atmadari more definitely against the regime. The shah responded with apologies to the ayatullah, a media campaign aimed at discrediting the protestors, and various pledges to continue the liberalization process.<sup>79</sup>

For a time in June and July it appeared that this strategy may have worked, as there was a period of relative quiescence. Already in late May the U.S. embassy was reporting hopefully that the number of "incidents" had dropped from one or two daily over the past couple of months to just three or four weekly. There was a one-day general strike on June 5 in Tehran and another in Qum on June 17, but these were peaceful, as was the fortieth-day commemoration a few days later. July too passed relatively calmly with the shah dropping the anti-profiteering campaign, banning pornographic films, replacing the head of SAVAK and promising "100 percent free" elections in the future. The economy continued to contract however as inflation was brought down, and a number of economically motivated strikes occurred. The political peace was shattered later in the month, too, as police fired on a crowd of mourners in Mashhad killing over 40 and touching off new mourning ceremonies.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> For March to May 1978, see Fischer, *Iran*, 196; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 507-8; Alidoost-Khaybari, "Religious Revolutionaries," 504-10; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 25-26; and Bill, "Power and Religion," 26, 26 note 6.

<sup>80</sup> For late May to late July, I have drawn on Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Muslim Students, *Asnad-i-jam'ah-i-jasusi*, volume 12, part 2: 110; volume 12, part 3: 19; volume 25: 36-37; Fischer, *Iran*, 196; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 248; and Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 509-13.

These coincided with the month of Ramazan in August, and dramatic new provocations and confrontations erupted. While the shah announced further liberalization measures on August 6, including free elections in which all but the Tudeh Party could participate, the anti-regime sermons of Khomeini and his network of students filled the mosques. Demonstrations and clashes resumed in a number of cities, and on August 10 at Isfahan 50,000 marched to protest the arrest of a local religious leader; troops fired on the crowd, killing some one hundred people, and martial law was declared there the next day. The greatest tragedy of the year to date then followed in Abadan on August 19, where over 400 people perished in a fire at the Rex Cinema during the showing of an anti-regime film. Though the perpetrators are shrouded in some mystery (a 1980 trial pointed to religious extremists but both the local police and fire brigades were clearly involved as the former barred crowds from opening the doors and the latter arrived four hours too late), the regime and SAVAK were widely held responsible by all of Iran. Ten thousand mourners shouted "Death to the shah! Burn him!" and forced the police from the cemetery. The last ten days of Ramazan saw 50 to 100 people die in confrontations with police in 14 cities. The shah responded to these events by replacing Amuzegar with the marginally more pious Ja'far Sharif-Imami as prime minister. Sharif-Imami made a series of rapid concessions, mostly with a calculated religious appeal—scrapping the imperial calendar, dismissing some government officials of the Baha'i faith, closing casinos and gambling houses, passing a code to address corruption by members of the royal family, and creating a ministry of religious affairs and abolishing that of women's affairs, while the shah disowned the Rastakhiz Party, granted more extensive press freedoms and promised free elections for mid-1979. On August 29 the major papers ran large, front-page pictures of Khomeini as part of a government overture to open a channel to him; the ayatollah refused to respond, as did Shari'atmadari a few days later.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> For the events of August I have consulted Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Balta and Rutteau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 26ff.; Fischer, *Iran*, 197-98; Halliday, *Iran*, 291; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 249-50; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 513-14; Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 51; Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 179-80; Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 9-10; Alidoost-Khaybari, "Religious Revolutionaries," 517, 519; and Iranian Students Association in the U.S., *Shah's Inferno: Abadan August 19, 1978* (Berkeley: ISAUS, 1978), 2ff.

The events of September marked the point of no return for the revolutionary process. The fast of Ramazan ended on September 4 with a large non-violent procession in Tehran of some 250,000 people, calling for Khomeini's return and throwing flowers on watching soldiers. Mass gatherings continued until the seventh, when up to a half million people called for the end of the Pahlavi dynasty, throwing out of America and establishment of an Islamic republic. Martial law was declared early the next morning, on Friday, September 8. Large crowds had already gathered at Jaleh square across from the majlis. When ordered to disperse people sat down and bared their chests. Soldiers fired first into the air, then directly into the crowd in a massacre. Shooting continued during the day, including aerial attacks from helicopters on the southern slums. Officially, 85 people were killed; bodies in the Tehran morgue numbered over 3,000. The event came to be known as Bloody Friday, and it marked the declaration of open war between the government and the population. The shah arrested hundreds of political figures, and declared martial law in 12 cities on September 17. From the ninth onward, a series of strikes started to spread among the workers in the oil industry. Compromise began to look increasingly unrealistic.<sup>82</sup>

These strikes continued and widened during October, involving oilworkers, government ministries, railway and post office workers, hospital employees, the press, and workers at numerous factories all over Iran. Demands had become political rather than economic in nature—notably for press and political freedoms and the overthrow of the dynasty. Khomeini meanwhile left Iraq for Paris on October 6, where he had at his disposal far more powerful mass media—direct phone links to Iran, cassette tapes, the world print media and BBC radio coverage—vastly enhancing his capacity to communicate with the Iranian people. The government continued to mix concessions with repression, but met with fewer takers for the former, which were hard to consider seriously when troops continued to kill unarmed demonstrators. Later in the month Shari'atmadari moved closer to Khomeini's positions, forced by the latter's intransigence to make a deal with the government. When the academic

<sup>82</sup> For the September events I have used Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 29-32; Fischer, *Iran*, 198-200; Munson's 1980 lectures on the Iranian Revolution; *Manchester Guardian*, September 5 and 6, 1978; *Le Monde*, September 6, 1978; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 345; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 514-17; and 'Ali Davani, *Nahzat-i Ruhaniyun-i Iran* [Movement of the Clergy of Iran] (Tehran: Bunyad-i Farhangi-yi Imam Reza, 1360/1980), volume 8, 6-105.

year began in late October students were able to organize more effectively, closing down classes and planning solidarity actions. Oil production fell from 5.7 million to 1.5 million barrels.<sup>83</sup>

Amidst this atmosphere of growing crisis, both sides intensified pressure in November and December. Two days of violent clashes at Tehran University on November 4 and 5 resulted in more deaths. The evening of November 4, Karim Sanjabi of the National Front read a three point declaration of agreement with Khomeini that the monarchy was no longer legitimate and that the opposition movement demanded a new regime based on principles of Islam, democracy and independence. As clashes continued in south Tehran and in the oil centers of the south, the shah announced the formation of a military government under General Reza Ghulam Azhari. Schools were closed, newspapers suspended, public gatherings prohibited. Oil workers were forced back to work by the army, but production was slowed. Other key strikes in government offices, factories and elsewhere continued, or else similar slowdowns occurred. On November 23 Khomeini issued a call for strikes and demonstrations in Muharram (beginning December 2); a large general strike occurred November 26, with hundreds of thousands marching in Mashhad and 200,000 in Qum. On November 29 wildcat strikes resumed in the oil fields and oil production began a permanent decline.<sup>84</sup>

December was the decisive month of 1978 for the opposition. Khomeini's call for action during the emotionally laden mourning month of Muharram was widely heeded. In early December people shouted "Allah-u Akbar!" (God is Great!) from their rooftops at night; thousands marched in the white shrouds of martyrs and over 1,000 were killed in Tehran, Mashhad and Qazvin violating the curfew from December 2 to 4. On the two holiest days of Tasu'a and 'Ashura huge demonstrations were held, involving two to three million people in Tehran, 700,000 in Mashhad, 500,000 in

<sup>83</sup> Fischer, *Iran*, 102-3, 200-201; Graham, *Iran*, 233; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 142; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 353 note 14; Muslim Students, *Asnad-i lanah-i jasusi*, volume 12, part 3: 169; volume 25: 95, 103, 113; volume 7: 245; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 517-18; Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 54; Moghadam, "Accumulation Strategy," 309; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 79-80, 85 figure 6.1; Dr. Kamran Kashani, in an interview recorded by Habib Ladjevardi, July 22, 1982, Mykonos, Greece, Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University, tape 1: 7.

<sup>84</sup> Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 43-52; Fischer, *Iran*, 202-204; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 250-52; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 520-21; Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 56-57; Terisa Turner, "Iranian Oilworkers in the 1978-79 Revolution," pp. 272-292 in Petter Nore and Terisa Turner, editors, *Oil and Class Struggle* (London: Zed Press, 1980), 281, 283; "How We Organized Strike that Paralyzed Shah's Regime. Firsthand Account by Iranian Oil Worker," pp. 292-301 in Petter Nore and Terisa Turner, editors, *Oil and Class Struggle* (London: Zed Press, 1980), 299-300.

Isfahan. At the end of the second day in Tehran a 17-point manifesto was acclaimed by the crowd calling for the abolition of the regime, an end to foreign exploitation, and establishment of a just and democratic Islamic state with full rights for minorities, women and exiles. On December 12 Carter reaffirmed his support for the shah, but in the next three weeks the government's tenuous hold over society eroded further. Despite army repression and more killing, demonstrations and strikes persisted. Oil production fell to 300,000 barrels a day by late December, less than even Iran's internal needs. As the economy shut down, American support for the shah, and his own resolve to continue the massacres, wavered. When General Azhari suffered a heart attack the shah made his decision to depart the country on a "vacation," and appointed Shahpour Bakhtiar of the National Front prime minister. One year to the day from Carter's toast to Iran's stability, a situation of revolutionary dual power was coming into effect.<sup>85</sup>

**Taking power: January-February 1979.** This period of contestation for power between Bakhtiar and the opposition bore resemblances to the Russian Revolution between February and November 1917 but in Iran it was compressed into little more than one month. The son of a tribal chief, Bakhtiar had been brought up in France and emerged as one of the leaders of the second National Front (1960-63), responsible in large measure for its failure. Personally ambitious, he was disowned by the National Front when he accepted the prime ministership from the shah, and had little popular appeal. He was confirmed by the majlis on January 3, and announced a series of concessions, including the lifting of censorship, release of most political prisoners, disbanding of SAVAK internally, the end of oil sales to South Africa and Israel, and that Iran would no longer police the Persian Gulf or purchase any more arms than necessary. He was greeted by continued work stoppages verging on a nationwide general strike, and a series of large demonstrations on the fifth, eighth and thirteenth, the last involving two million people in 30 cities. Finally, on January 11 it was announced that the shah would soon depart the country on his vacation. After appointing a regency

<sup>85</sup> For the events of December I have consulted Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 54-79; Fischer, *Iran*, 204-209; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 94; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 521-24; Moghadam, "Accumulation Strategy," 310-11; and William H. Sullivan, "Dateline Iran: The Road Not Taken," pp. 175-186 in *Foreign Policy*, number 40 (Fall 1980), 180.

council on the 13th headed by Bakhtiar, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi left Iran for Egypt on January 16 as crowds went wild with joy. The next day Khomeini announced the formation of the Council of the Islamic Revolution from Paris (its members were kept secret for a year, but included Bani Sadr, Bazargan and other members of the Liberation Movement, and four students of Khomeini—Ayatollahs Bihishti and Mutahhari and Hojjat al-Islams Rafsanjani and Bahonar. Bakhtiar was further discredited when troops fired on a peaceful demonstration at Ahwaz on the seventeenth. On January 19 huge demonstrations of one million in Tehran, 500,000 in Mashhad and 100,000 in Qum were held. In the Tehran march the crowd adopted a historic resolution by acclamation:

We declare the Shah to be dethroned and remove him from power, which he and his father seized by force.... We condemn the reactionary regime of the Shah, and demand the establishment in Iran of an Islamic order and of a free Islamic Republic, founded on the will of the people, and guiding the country in accordance with the life-giving teachings of Islam.<sup>86</sup>

A leftist demonstration drew a far smaller crowd of 10,000 to the technical university on January 21, while Bakhtiar mustered 100,000 the next day, mostly from the army and upper classes. The army occupied the airport on January 24 to prevent Khomeini's return, but when one million people demanded this in Tehran on the 27th, it was decided on January 30 to allow it.

Thus, on February 1, 1979 Khomeini returned triumphantly to Iran after 13 years abroad. Three to four million people, perhaps the largest crowd in world history, lined the streets from the airport to Tehran. Khomeini went to Bihisht Zahra cemetery to pay tribute to the martyrs of the revolution and in his speech called on Bakhtiar to step down and the army to be loyal to the nation, not to America. On February 5 Khomeini announced the establishment of a provisional government headed by Mehdi Bazargan, to which government employees immediately announced their adherence. Complex negotiations were entered into between Bazargan, the army and American advisors about a transfer of power from Bakhtiar to the provisional government. On February 8 there were huge

<sup>86</sup> Resolution drafted by the Organizational Committee of the Tehran Clergy, quoted in A. B. Reznikov, "The Downfall of the Iranian Monarchy (January-February 1979), pp. 254-312 in R. Ulyanovsky, *The Revolutionary Process in the East: Past and Present* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), 270. For the events of January 1979 I have drawn on Balta and Rulleau, *Iran insurgé*, 78-85; Fischer, *Iran*, 210-11; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 256; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 349-50; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 525-28; Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 119; Moghadam, "Accumulation Strategy," 311-12; and Green, *Revolution in Iran*, 164-65.

demonstrations, including leftist and air force contingents, with the slogan "Khumaini, give us arms." This led to the events culminating in the triumph of the revolution over the weekend of February 9-11. The evening of the ninth, the elite Javidan unit of the Imperial Guards attacked the Farahabad base of the air technicians who had joined the demonstration the day before. The technicians resisted and were soon joined by local civilians and armed members of the Fada'ian and Mujahidin guerrilla groups. Fighting continued all day Saturday the tenth and on into Sunday with the guerrillas on the offensive, attacking and burning police stations, taking a large arsenal, and putting a number of tanks out of commission while suffering several hundred casualties. Evin prison and the main army garrison were taken on Sunday. The army high command then decided to abandon Bakhtiar, who slipped quietly out of the country. At 6 p.m. on Sunday, February 11, the radio announced: "This is the voice of Tehran, the voice of true Iran, the voice of the revolution. The dictatorship has come to an end."<sup>87</sup>

## V. A Theoretical Analysis of the Iranian Revolution

Here we shall tie together the theoretical strands of our argument about Iran's revolution, focusing on salient features of the events in light of our key concepts—populist alliance, political culture, nature of the state and world-system. Brief comparisons of the revolution with other instances of revolution (including in Iran) will also be made, and an analytic sketch of developments since 1979 concludes the study.

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<sup>87</sup> This is a composite quote based on Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 529, and Graham, *Iran*, 237. For the events of the final days, I have used Algar's 1982 lectures on "Islam in Iran"; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 86-95; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 257; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 495, 526-29; and Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 17.

### V.A. The Populist Alliance in the Revolution

**Social forces.** Almost all serious scholars of Iran have noted that a coalition of classes made the Iranian Revolution. Abrahamian sees this in terms of an alliance between traditional middle classes (ulama, merchants) and modern middle classes (intelligentsia, students), with workers and lower urban classes acting as "battering rams." Keddie views the mass movement as a mobilization of the urban poor from February to September 1978, with the middle and working classes joining in the fall. Zabih points out that the various components had learned that they could not succeed on their own—the ulama in 1963, students in their demonstrations, workers in their strikes. Bashiriyeh observes that the ulama united with Marxists and liberals to overthrow the regime. Ashraf and Banuazizi perceptively break the revolution down into five stages, each with its own actors and modes of struggle: an opening act from June to December 1977 of nonviolent mobilization led by students and intellectuals; a second stage of cyclical riots from January to July 1978 in which the ulama and bazaar classes became involved; followed by a third phase of mass demonstrations in August and September with the above plus urban middle and marginal classes; stage four in the fall of 1978 carried by mass strikes of blue and white collar workers; and a final period of dual sovereignty from December 1978 to February 1979 in which all these classes were united against the shah's regime.<sup>88</sup> We may note also that Bill refers to a "multiclass alliance," and Arjomand (with reference to the work of Barrington Moore) to "coalitions of classes and social groups" in revolutions generally, while Alidoost-Khaybari quotes Anthony Oberschall approvingly: "No single class or stratum can make a revolution."<sup>89</sup>

The conceptual framework and empirical results of the present study suggest that the social forces involved in the revolution constitute another instance of Iran's urban, multi-class populist alliance. Val Moghadam, while not developing her argument at length, nor extending it back in time to

<sup>88</sup> See, respectively, Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 532-35; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 250-51, and "The Midas Touch," 261; Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 74; Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 116; Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization."

<sup>89</sup> See Bill, "Power and Religion," 27; Arjomand, "The Causes and Significance," 51, with reference to Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); and Alidoost-Khaybari, "Religious Revolutionaries," 13, 490, quoting A. Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1973), 82.

encompass the Constitutional Revolution or oil nationalization struggle, has also explicitly stated this:

The fusion of diverse social groups, grievances and demands into a populist alliance and discourse calling for an end to Pahlavi rule, imperialist domination and dependent relations is what made possible the successful outcome of the Revolution.<sup>90</sup>

Kambiz Afrachteh has referred to "theocratic populism" in the Iranian Revolution, but here he uses the term strictly in the sense of a political ideology, not the social base of the movement.<sup>91</sup> In contrast, I am employing the term "populist" much less to describe the ideological direction of the movement (which was conceived of as consisting of quite diverse and competing political cultures above) as to denote the popular, mass aspect of participation. The revolution witnessed the largest demonstrations against a government in human history and a sustained political general strike that may be considered the most successful in working class history. Its massive rate of participation made possible its triumph through the disciplined use of primarily nonviolent tactics despite the repression directed against it resulting in an estimated 10-12,000 deaths between January 1978 and February 1979.<sup>92</sup> The analytic strength of the present study rests in not only description of the multi-class character of the revolution, but explanation of how each group and class came to participate (section III.B above) and underlying this, a theoretical model of how these grievances came about (Diagram 9.1). In the context of Iran's class structure, ulama, merchants, artisans, intellectuals, workers and urban marginals composed the populist alliance. Peasants and tribespeople had small supporting roles. Women and religious minorities cut across class categories to participate. Let us now turn to the contributions of each component of this populist alliance during the revolution itself.

The ulama, led by Khomeini, and to a lesser extent the bazaar classes of merchants and artisans upon whom they relied for financial support, played key roles in the revolution. Khomeini and his

<sup>90</sup> Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 16-17. See also *ibid.*, 4, 6, and Moghadam, "Industrial Development," 152, 172 note 5, and "Accumulation Strategy," 305, 307.

<sup>91</sup> Kambiz Afrachteh, "The Predominance and Dilemmas of Theocratic Populism in Contemporary Iran," pp. 189-213 in *Iranian Studies*, volume XIV, numbers 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 1981), 192-95.

<sup>92</sup> Bill, "Power and Religion," 28, 28 note 9. This is a rough guess based on analysis of payments to families of martyrs by the Martyrs Foundation after the revolution and extrapolation from the fact that 135 of 577 documented deaths, or 23 percent, occurred in Tehran. It tallies closely with Abrahamian's estimate of 10,000 killed ("Iran's Turbanned Revolution," 89), but is much greater than Ashraf and Banuazizi's figure of 3,008: "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 22 table 2.

circle of former students, organized in both loose and formal networks, emerged as crucial leaders during 1978 (but not in the fall 1977 actions leading up to the revolution). They activated a religious political culture of opposition to tyranny and foreign domination, organized the funeral processions that kept the movement in motion at regular 40-day intervals, and led the largest mass demonstrations of 1978 during Ramazan (August-September) and Muharram (December). Despite this prominent involvement by Khomeini's students and the younger ulama generally, there were many other ulama who took conservative (or no) positions during 1978, as well as significant differences of opinion between the uncompromising Khomeini and other clerical authorities, such as Shari'atmadari, who called only for implementation of the constitution and joined in calling for an end to the monarchy only under some pressure from followers of Khomeini.<sup>93</sup> Khomeini himself served an indispensable role in providing a clear, firm alternative to the shah and astutely bringing the heterogeneous social forces of the populist alliance under his leadership, including leftists, workers and secular middle classes. His most eager followers came from among the merchants and artisans of the bazaar, who provided financial resources, networks of communication, and participants in many demonstrations. Artisans were active not in their capacity as laborers in small workshops, but as part of the urban mass movement and in bazaar actions. They were numerically most significant in the series of 40-day protests in January, February, March and May 1978, before hundreds of thousands got involved.<sup>94</sup> The creative organizational embodiment of ulama and bazaar participation in the revolution was the formation of Islamic *komitehs* (committees) in neighborhoods throughout the country in the latter part of 1978. Often headed by pro-Khomeini ulama, these provided strike support, welfare, food and security in their local areas. By January and February 1979 the revolutionary *komitehs* constituted parallel governments with economic, political and military functions. Though loosely coordinated and locally rather autonomous, virtually all supported Khomeini.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> On the ulama in the revolution, see Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 26; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 353 note 14; and Muslim Students, *Asnad-i tanah-i jasusi*, volume 7: 251; volume 25: 95, 103, 113; volume 26: 61.

<sup>94</sup> Moghadam, "Accumulation Strategy," 313; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 95.

<sup>95</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 257-58; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 526-27; Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 16, 34.

Along with the ulama the other class that aspired to a leadership role in the revolution was the intelligentsia. Writers, poets, journalists, lawyers and teachers initiated the sequence of events leading up to the revolution with their open letters, formation of associations and cultural/poetry reading nights in 1977, campaigning for democratic and human rights. In 1977, when *Kayhan* newspaper asked "What is wrong with Iran?" over 40,000 letters were received, an indication of the depth of the intelligentsia's movement. Students also were active on their campuses in 1977 and throughout 1978 contributed to both the mass demonstrations and general strike. Likewise, civil servants, professionals and employees in the government ministries conducted effective white collar strikes parallel to those of the factory and oil workers. Khomeini was accepted by these groups as the leader of the revolution only at a later point (fall 1978), sometimes with considerable reluctance and in a critical spirit, as in the case of the Teachers Union. Students and young members of the intelligentsia moreover suffered the most casualties relative to their size.<sup>96</sup> This class was the social base for both the secular liberals of the National Front and the leftwing guerrilla organizations. The National Front, though small in numbers, played a part in the building of anti-shah momentum in the fall of 1978 by refusing to work with the government for a reform of the system. Instead, on November 4 it allied with Khomeini in Paris behind a program based on Islam, independence and democracy. This brought many secular intellectuals and the middle classes generally into the movement and thereby assured the alliance of both its secular and religious components, although it is true that the Front's leadership role was vitiated somewhat as well into that of a junior partner.<sup>97</sup>

Intellectuals and students were also instrumental in the roles played by the Mujahidin, Fada'ian and Tudeh during the revolution. All of these groups marched in demonstrations, supported the general strike, and were prepared at the end to confront the regime militarily. Paykar and Fada'i activists organized in the industrial strikes at Tabriz, while Tudeh members agitated in the Tehran factories and southern oil fields.<sup>98</sup> All of these groups, and particularly the Tudeh, saw in Khomeini

<sup>96</sup> Muslim Students, *Asnad-i lanah-i jasusi*, volume 26: 31; Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 26; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 225.

<sup>97</sup> On the National Front in the revolution, see Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 43-44; Fischer, *Iran*, 201; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 252; and Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 347, 353 note 15.

<sup>98</sup> For varying assessments of these events, see Moghadam, "Industrial Development," 167; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 451, 526; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 330 note 9; Zabih, *Iran's*

an ardent anti-imperialist and opponent of the regime. Nevertheless they also made their own demands, warning Khomeini not to monopolize the revolution and calling on the population to resist the manipulation of Islam to undermine democracy. Their presence in the December 1978 demonstrations with the slogan "Arms to the people!" radicalized some participants; from this point on they organized openly, distributing pamphlets and newspapers and recruiting many members, especially among the young. Significantly, in the final uprising of February 9-11, 1979 it was above all members of the Fada'ian, Mujahidin and Tudeh who did most of the fighting that led to the collapse of the army and the triumph of the revolution.<sup>99</sup>

Iran's working class also played a pivotal role in the mass movement as the initiators of numerous more or less spontaneous strikes which coalesced into a general strike by the end of 1978. Strike activity had picked up in 1977 and the first half of 1978, mostly of an economic nature, contributing to the general ferment during the shah's brief liberalization campaign. In the hot summer of 1978 strikers began to make more political demands. This new trend became apparent in September and October when the oil workers' strike began. They were soon joined by communications, transport, banking, hospital and industrial workers in the paper, machine tools, tobacco, textile, steel and other sectors. Despite offers of large wage increases, workers stayed on strike, while frequently voicing support for Khomeini and the growing social movement. The strike by Iran's 30,000 or more oil workers was determinant; forced back to work by the army in November, they went out again in December and stayed out. By then all of Iran was on strike in what amounted to a massive political general strike. Oil workers said: "We will export oil only when we have exported the shah."<sup>100</sup> Once this had been achieved strikes continued, making it impossible for the Bakhtiari government to function.

*Revolutionary Upheaval*, 44, 84 note 9; Turner, "Iranian Oilworkers," 291 note 18; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 110; and Abrahamian, "Strengths and Weaknesses," 231.

<sup>99</sup> Zafarian, "Analytical Approach," 166; Fischer, *Iran*, 211; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 522; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 251-52.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in *Iran Times*, January 12, 1979, as cited by Abrahamian, "Iran's Turbaned Revolution," 89. On the strike movement, see Fischer, *Iran*, 200-201; Graham, *Iran*, 233; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 251; Muslim Students, *Asnad-i lanah-i jasusi*, volume 12, part 3: 169; volume 7: 245; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 512, 517-18, 522-23, 525; Zabih, *Iran's Revolutionary Upheaval*, 54, 60; "How We Organized Strike," 299-300; Moghadam, "Industrial Development," 167; Moghadam, "Accumulation Strategy," 308-11; and Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 85-88.

There is evidence that many of Iran's striking workers admired Khomeini less for religious than political reasons, seeing him as resolutely opposed to the shah. The oil workers listened to his directives but made their own decisions about conducting their strike. The anti-clerical tendency of some workers is exemplified by the resignation of M. J. Khatami, leader of the oil strikers, in late January 1979 to protest "the dogmatic reactionary clergy," "the new form of repression under the guise of religion" and the "arbitrary interferences" of Khomeini's envoy in the oil strike.<sup>101</sup> The fact that being "for Islam" meant seeking a better future economically and materially is expressed in the second epigraph to this chapter. The Marxist Fada'i and Tudeh, the Islamic socialists of the Mujahidin and Shari'ati were all active influences on the strikers among the working class. During the course of the strike movement workers founded their own unique institutions, known as *shuras* ("councils"; cf. "soviets"). These were grass-roots, decentralized strike committees organized at factories, offices and schools. Their ideological complexion also varied from Islamic to leftist; one activist in a Tabriz shura said "We had all kinds of workers: Left, Right, religious, progressive, reactionary."<sup>102</sup> Shuras took over production and distribution in their factories as the strike came to an end, for managers, particularly in the foreign-owned sector, had often fled the country. Wages were raised, libraries set up, free lunches and transportation were arranged in various workplaces. The general strike served two purposes: it weakened the shah's regime, delegitimizing it internally and making it difficult to repress the movement (for the army needed fuel, the ministries needed communications). And it convinced the West, led by the United States, that the shah could no longer guarantee the flow of Iranian oil, let alone provide a stable outlet for investment capital. It was thus absolutely central to the success of the revolution; Khomeini could not have taken power (or would have had an unimaginably more difficult task doing so) without the working class general strike.

The most important supporting mass role played by the lower classes during the revolution was that of the urban marginals. It will be recalled that the marginal classes fought evictions from shanty

<sup>101</sup> Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 94, quoting the newspaper *Ayandegan*, February 2, 1979. See also "Iran: The New Crisis of American Hegemony," 18-19, quoting *New York Times*, November 19, 1978.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted by Moghadam, "Industrial Development," 168. On the shura movement, see *ibid.*, 153; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 6, 92-94; Turner, "Iranian Oilworkers," 279-81; "How We Organized Strike," 293-94; and Moghadam, "Accumulation Strategy," 4, 10, 305, 316, 318, 321-28.

town areas in south Tehran in the summer of 1977, thereby showing that the regime could be resisted. Motivated by religious fervor and economic need, and extolled by Khomeini as the *mustazafin* ("oppressed masses," "the disinherited"), the urban marginal classes swelled the ranks of the large demonstrations of 1978. Here they faced the army's guns, suffering many of the 10,000 casualties of the revolution. Poor urban youth were particularly active, some emerging as leaders of their neighborhoods during the mass marches. Squatters (the poorest of the urban marginals) were less active than settled urban marginals. One squatter told a reporter that to demonstrate "you have to have a full stomach"; another that he had no time to participate but believed "things will get better once the King goes."<sup>103</sup>

The peasants and tribespeople of the countryside were much less active but did participate in the revolution to a certain degree. A few peasants had been mobilized by the regime in early 1978 to attack demonstrations and march in pro-shah processions, but this soon tailed off. On the side of the revolution, those who lived close enough to urban areas to commute, and again, especially young commuters, took an active role in demonstrations from the fall of 1978 onwards, quite similar to nonsquatting urban migrants in the pattern of their involvement. They also brought the revolution home with them to their villages. In September 1978, when 20,000 died in an earthquake near Tabas, villagers reprimanded the queen: "Why do you come to look at us? Grab a shovel and help us bury our dead."<sup>104</sup> Rural class struggles intensified near Shiraz in late 1978. The gendarmerie began to abandon its posts in the countryside in mid-December; by early January most villagers were tacitly or openly supporting the winning pro-Khomeini forces. Peasants near Tehran marched in the large Muharram demonstrations of December 1978. Some instances of peasants occupying landlords' properties in early 1979 are recorded, particularly in Kurdistan and Turkaman Sahra (northeastern Iran), where peasants' councils were set up. While Ashraf and Banuazizi claim that peasants "played no significant role in any phase of the revolution," Zavareci feels that peasants

<sup>103</sup> Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 95, citing *Washington Post*, January 14, 1979, and *New York Times*, December 4, 1978. This paragraph draws on *ibid.*, 2, 86-89, 95-96; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 535; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 143, 146, 148; Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 10; and Zavareci, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 175-76.

<sup>104</sup> Fischer, *Iran*, 200.

eventually provided a base of support for religious fundamentalists. Hooglund however cautions that villagers were in general somewhat ambivalent or superficial in their support for Khomeini because they questioned what he knew about their problems and they could see rural elites ingratiating themselves with the movement and dominating the new village councils.<sup>105</sup> We may conclude that peasants as a class were not instrumental in the populist alliance, but did play a variety of roles in the revolution, as noted here.

Tribespeople were even less well placed to be active, although again, there were exceptions. In 1978-79 Kurdistan seized the opportunity to renew its long-standing hostility to the central government. Local Sunni ulama mobilized tribespeople to some degree both there and in Baluchistan. Turkaman Sahra, where police and army posts were attacked, was also an area of tribal revolt. Arabs in Khuzistan were led by their own Ayatullah al-Shabir Khaqani. In some places nomads regained pasture rights. Abrahamian notes that the councils and komitehs in all these areas were demanding a *democratic* Islamic republic, one that would guarantee the rights of the provinces, ethnic minorities and Sunnis.<sup>106</sup> Tribal youth tended to be more leftist in orientation than their elders. The tribes as a whole were less motivated than others by Islam; indeed, they continued to resist the new government after February 1979 and to suffer repression as a result.

Finally, women and the religious minorities also contributed to the revolution, in most respects along their respective class lines. The large demonstrations often featured thousands of chador-clad women in the front ranks in spite of (and to reduce) the danger. Keddie considers these primarily "bazaari women"; the urban lower classes and students could be counted among them as well. Women also participated in the workers' councils in small numbers (presumably proportionate to their fewer numbers in the workforce).<sup>107</sup> I have seen little data on the religious minorities in the

<sup>105</sup> Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 25; Zavareei, "Dependent Capitalist Development," 175; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 149-50. On peasants in the revolution, see Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, ix, 143-51; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 522; Turner, "Iranian Oilworkers," 287; Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 114; Moghadam, "Accumulation Strategy," 305-306; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 54; and Val Moghadam (under the pseudonym Shahrzad Azad), "Workers' and Peasants' Councils in Iran," pp. 14-29 in *Monthly Review*, volume 32, number 5 (October 1980), 15-16.

<sup>106</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 527. These remarks on the tribes are based on Beck, lecture on "Tribes and the State"; Carthwaite, *Khans and shahs*, 141; Beck, "Revolutionary Iran," 16-17, 19-20; Moghadam, "Workers' and Peasants' Councils," 15-16; and Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 54.

<sup>107</sup> On women see Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 248; Balta and Rulleau, *L'Iran insurgé*, 89; and Moghadam,

revolution. Logically, many of them would have been involved as members of their own classes—intellectuals, students, merchants, artisans, workers, urban marginals. While seeking the overthrow of the shah, it is likely there was considerable apprehension about the prospect of an Islamic republic among Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians. The latter two groups (and probably also the first) put out communiqués stressing their solidarity with the movement.<sup>108</sup>

**Political cultures.** Further insight can be gained into the nature of the 1978-79 version of the populist alliance through an examination of the political cultures at work in the revolution. Here we may usefully distinguish an Islamic populist discourse, a secular nationalist current and a leftist idiom. Of these the hegemonic political culture was clearly Khomeini's populist Islam. As Khomeini said of this own appeal in late 1978: "The symbol of the struggle is the one who talks with the people.... That's why the Iranian people consider me a symbol. I talk their language. I listen to their needs. I cry for them."<sup>109</sup> The terms Khomeini used to address the Iranian public in his speeches included "the aware, combative and courageous people of Iran," "the dear and courageous nation" and "the oppressed of Iran"—all evoking nationalist sentiments. He more frequently employed Islamic terms—"the combative Islamic community," "the Iranian Muslim people." The ulama could virtually command people to participate with such language as "It is expected the entire Muslim community will participate"; "This is an Islamic duty and must be followed"; "This is a Godly duty"; and "It is incumbent upon the Iranian people."<sup>110</sup> Khomeini's mastery of this religious vernacular, his direct appeal to the diverse elements of the populist alliance and the clarity of his goals are exhibited in the speech he gave at the beginning of Muharram 1978:

Dear young people at the centres of religious learning, the universities, the schools and teachers' training colleges! Respected journalists! Deprived workers and peasants! Militant and enlightened bazaar merchants and tradesmen! And all other classes of the population, from the proud nomadic tribes to the deprived dwellers in slums and tents! Advance together, with a single voice and a single purpose, to the sacred aim of Islam—

"Industrial Development," 168.

<sup>108</sup> Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Power of Tradition: Communication and the Iranian Revolution," Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Communications [?], Columbia University (1985), 208.

<sup>109</sup> Khomeini, in an interview in *Newsweek* (November 6, 1978), 80, quoted by Bill, "Power and Religion," 92-93.

<sup>110</sup> All of these terms are given by Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Power of Tradition," 221-22, 226.

the abolition of the cruel Pahlavi dynasty, the destruction of the abominable monarchical regime, and the establishment of an Islamic Republic based on the progressive dictates of Islam! Victory is yours, nation arised in revolt!<sup>111</sup>

For Moghadam the core substantive elements of Khomeini's Islamic populism are "National independence, a more equitable distribution of wealth and resources, and the special place of the poor.... Strongly present are also an existential quest for justice (*edalat*) and redress of grievances; these are part of the Shi'i repertoire."<sup>112</sup>

Other aspects of the religious populist discourse included the evocation of the theme of martyrdom that inspired the bravery of the crowds in the large demonstrations. The unarmed people faced down a well-equipped army, breaking down its discipline and will to repress them by appeals to a common Islamic identity. As Keddie comments on the peacefulness of the mass movement: "Human life was spared, even of those considered enemies, and except for rare incidents involving a very few persons at the high point of late revolutionary fervor, even American lives were inviolable."<sup>113</sup> Despite much destruction of property, there was little looting. Rather, crowds would remove items from offices, banks, liquor stores and the like and burn them in the street. The self-perception of this nonviolence was that "a people with empty hands but a great faith, *dast-e khali va iman-e bozorg*, brought down the Pahlavi regime."<sup>114</sup>

Secular political discourses were also articulated during the revolution although in a minor key:

National Front and democratic grouplets tended to use *mardom*, people and *mellat*, nation (as distinct from *dowlat*, the state). Leftist groups such as the Tudeh party, the Fedai and even the Mujahedin used class-based notions such as *kargaran*, workers; *zahmatkeshan*, toilers; *tudeh*, the masses; *khalq*, people (with ethnic overtones).<sup>115</sup>

The leftist idiom was confined to the educated middle class (especially students and other intelligentsia), some workers and some urban marginal youth. The National Front's appeals to the nation were broadly congruent with the larger Islamic political culture and easily swallowed up by it.

Though Khomeini decried any alliance with the left both early on (May 1978) and after the

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 229, quoting Algar's translation of Khomeini's speech.

<sup>112</sup> Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 21-22.

<sup>113</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 244.

<sup>114</sup> Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Power of Tradition," 237. On nonviolence in the revolution, see Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 15-16, and *Manchester Guardian*, September 5 and 6, 1978. On acts of street violence, see Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 522-23.

<sup>115</sup> Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Power of Tradition," 223-24.

revolution (August 1979), at the crucial moment—November 1978—his representative in Tehran, Ayatullah Bihishti, called on “the Marxists, materialists and liberals to cooperate for some time and with one voice to continue the valuable struggle against the regime.”<sup>116</sup> The left and the National Front for the most part responded to this appeal to unity, submerging differences and taking Islamic populism’s themes of national independence, anti-imperialism, overthrow of the monarchy and social justice as acceptable lowest common denominators.

Another way to enter into the political culture operative in the revolution is to consider the many slogans used in the demonstrations. These too reveal the Islamic and left/secular currents, as well as the ultimate unanimity between them on key demands. Religious slogans—it should be kept in mind that many of these are quite lyrical in Persian—included: “Our movement upholds the Quran, and our country upholds Islam!”, “A Muslim’s silence is a betrayal of Islam!”, and “This filthy government is worse than Yazid!” (the general responsible for the massacre of the Imam Husain and his followers in the seventh century).<sup>117</sup> Khomeini is invoked in the chants “Our party is that of Allah and our leader is Ruhullah!” and “God, the Quran, Khomeini” (used by people overturning a statue of the shah at the university and consciously mocking the regime’s version of “God, the shah, the country”).<sup>118</sup> Leftwing slogans heard during Muharran 1978 and early 1979 included: “Long live the revolutionary fighters!”, “Arms to the people!”, and “Glory to the Fada’ian!”<sup>119</sup> The movement could agree on some basic central points: “Death to the shah!” (heard as early as February 1978 at Tabriz), “The shah is Carter’s dog!”, “Hang the American puppet!” and “We will kill Iran’s dictator, we will destroy Yankee power in Iran!”—each of which single out the shah and foreign domination as the twin opponents of the people.<sup>120</sup> Sometimes quite elaborate calls and responses were used, as during the huge Muharram demonstrations of December

<sup>116</sup> Ayatullah Khomeini, Bihishti, et al., *Hukumat-i Jumhuri-yi Islami* [The Government of the Islamic Republic] (Tehran, 1358/1979), 69, as quoted by Bashiriyei, *The State and Revolution*, 116. For Khomeini’s positions in May 1978, see *Le Monde*, May 6, 1978, quoted in Zafarian, “Analytic Approach,” 163, and for summer 1979, see *ibid.*, 164.

<sup>117</sup> Reznikov, “The Downfall of the Iranian Monarchy,” 267, citing *Ittila’at*, January 13, 1979.

<sup>118</sup> Balta and Rulleau, *L’Iran insurgé*, 58ff.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 522; Reznikov, “The Downfall of the Iranian Monarchy,” 267.

<sup>120</sup> Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 244; *Manchester Guardian*, September 6, 1978; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 522; Fischer, *Iran*, 205.

1978:

Cheerleader: Who took our oil?

Crowd: America!

Cheerleader: Who took our gas?

Crowd: Russia!

Cheerleader: Who took our money?

Crowd: Pahlavi!

Refrain: Death to this Pahlavi dynasty!

Death to this Pahlavi dynasty!

Chant: Cannon, tank, machine gun,

They have no more effect.

The Shah is an ass.

He must be chained.<sup>121</sup>

Finally, the themes which the populist alliance ultimately united around are contained in the demand "Independence, Freedom, Islamic republic" (heard from September 4, 1978 on) and the cry "Long live Khumaini, Islam, democracy, freedom and equality!"<sup>122</sup>

#### **V.B. State and World-System: Some Considerations**

**The state and revolution.** In *States and Social Revolutions*, Skocpol argued that conflict between a potentially autonomous state and elite classes constituted one locus of state breakdowns leading to revolution. In her essay on Iran, she no longer holds to this view, noting the insignificance of elite conflict with the state and instead focussing on the vulnerabilities of the rentier-type state (that it relates to society through expenditures and that it is tied to the "rhythms of the world capitalist economy"). Indeed she rather downplays the role of the state altogether in the Iranian Revolution, directing attention instead to the strength of the opposition.<sup>123</sup> Here I shall

<sup>121</sup> Used in the 'Ashura march in Shiraz, as quoted by Fischer, *Iran*, 190.

<sup>122</sup> Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 197; Saikal, *Rise and Fall*, 194.

discuss the precise role played by the Pahlavi state by examining state/elite relations, state/army relations and the behavior of all of these social forces in the revolution.

As discussed in Chapter Eight, the Iranian bourgeoisie was essentially dependent on the state as the motor of development and source of capital as well as maker of the rules of the political economic game. The state was thus so "autonomous" (powerful) that elite opposition could not play a part in undermining it; rather, the elite was bound to cooperate with the state and foreign capital in order to take a cut of the surplus on their terms. The "state" moreover in Iran was closely identified with the shah and his family (although in the broad sense it included the key institutions of the army and bureaucracy as well). This made it a solid target for social movements without fully implicating the rest of the dominant classes—landlords, industrialists, large merchants, tribal chiefs, high bureaucrats—who therefore had less of a stake in rushing to defend it. Beyond the upper classes, which were passively connected to it, the state hoped to command the loyalty of other social sectors—peasants through land reform, workers through shares in industry, a few ulama through patronage, civil servants through employment opportunities, middle classes through consumption, and urban marginals through promises and some distribution of money on occasions such as elections and in times of urban unrest. How well these strata responded during the revolution will be considered in a moment, but we already know that Pahlavi claims to legitimation were rather weak even by Iranian standards. Ultimately the shah relied on the security apparatus of police, army and SAVAK to control society and preserve his position at the head of it. Exorbitant weapons purchases, extravagant perquisites for high officers, and indoctrination of the rank and file with loyalty to God, shah and country were the means used to ensure the support of the army, whose main purpose was one of social control. Thus its response to the revolutionary crisis would prove to be central to the fate of the Pahlavi regime.

The state's reaction to the events of 1978 took the form of a characteristic mix of repression and concessions in an increasingly desperate attempt to buy the support of some sectors and to

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<sup>123</sup> Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam," 268-71.

intimidate the rest of society. Thus elections were promised, censorship, corruption and torture reduced somewhat, wage increases granted and so on, at the same time that the army was repeatedly ordered to fire on demonstrators. The shah's mood and policy swings have been attributed by some to his growing cancer; but his woeful ignorance of society—telling a British journalist in September 1978, for example, that there were no slums in Tehran—cannot be so explained, and contributed to the poor policy and judgment displayed throughout the year.<sup>124</sup> The loss of trusted advisors like 'Alam and Iqbal hurt the shah, and splits between hard- and soft-liners in his administration only mirrored his own ambivalence. The lack or unwillingness of interlocutors within civil society, be they the National Front, ulama, professional organizations, independent unions or political parties, severely limited the range of options available for dealing with unrest once it got under way. The shah's exacerbation of the economic downswing by following a deflationary policy during 1978 also made matters worse, limiting the patronage resources available to the state and magnifying internal conflict within it.

For all this, the shah did not roll over and quit in 1978. Immediately after the January 1978 demonstration at Qum the state tried to mobilize its social base in counter-demonstrations, and the newspapers reported pro-shah crowds of 50,000 at Tabriz on January 18, of 200,000 in Khuzistan a day later, and 300,000 in Tabriz some weeks later on April 9. These crowds included peasants trucked in to the cities for the occasion, schoolchildren, civil servants and others whom the state could at first coerce into participating. Even when the size of the mass movement removed such fears, the Pahlavi-appointed Bakhtiar government could mobilize 100,000 in January 1979, although by then the opposition demonstrators numbered in the millions. Other efforts included the formation of paramilitary groups such as SAVAK's Underground Committee of Revenge and the Rastakhiz Party's Resistance Corps, to threaten, kidnap, attack and bomb opposition leaders, organizations and demonstrations. Such groups paid members of the marginal classes, workers and some peasants to do their work for them. But the shift from voluntary to coercive forms of "mass support" reflected

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<sup>124</sup> Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 196; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 255-56.

the deteriorating position of the regime, such that "The Shah himself, in December 1978, summed up the tragicomedy of his sinking regime. When asked by a foreign correspondent where his supporters were, he shrugged his shoulders and replied, "Search me".<sup>125</sup>

The regime's last bastion of defense was the army itself. Arjomand has pointed out that the army remained intact for longer than in 1917 Russia (but of course it had not been defeated in a foreign war). It was certainly reliable through the autumn of 1978, killing protestors on numerous occasions and forcing strikers back to work. But by December, appeals from the ulama and demonstrators not to fire on unarmed Muslims began to take effect, and hundreds of rank-and-file soldiers deserted at Qum and Mashhad during Muharram, making it impossible to prevent the huge demonstrations that shook the regime. Defections reached one thousand a day during that month, as devout conscripts abandoned their regiments. Others refused to follow orders, joined demonstrations, distributed weapons to the opposition, shot their officers, or went on hunger strikes. It was left to the officers to do much of the actual firing on demonstrators thereafter. The high command was divided into those who wished to use all the force at their disposal, and those who knew it would be useless and even dangerous to do so. Some officers wanted to keep the army out of politics in order to maintain it as an institution, and others were susceptible to religious appeals themselves. Corruption and privilege undermined the actions of the top generals. Eventually, those who remained signed a secret agreement with the opposition to send some of the worst officers out of the country and to retain others in their posts. Even this could not prevent the need for the three-day armed uprising in February 1979 to finish off the elite units that remained loyal to the shah to the end. Iran's isolated, untested army could not alone stem the tide of revolution against a regime in economic, political and ideological crisis, without a strong social base.<sup>126</sup> The "autonomous" Iranian state, despite the absence of elite contenders or military defeat, proved in the end extremely fragile.

<sup>125</sup> Abrahamian, "Structural Causes," 26, quoting *New York Times*, December 17, 1978. On pro-shah social forces, see Alidoost-Khaybari, "Religious Revolutionaries," 498-505; Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 115, 119; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 508; and Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 15, 34.

<sup>126</sup> On the army in the revolution, see Arjomand, "The Causes and Significance," 45; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 523; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 256; Bashiriyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 119, 123 note 21; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 347-48; Reznikov, "The Downfall of the Iranian Monarchy," 269; and Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 195-96.

**World-system and revolution.** These internal weaknesses had an external counterpart as well, though again it did not follow the scenario sketched by Skocpol of intense external pressure in the international system of competing states as a cause of revolutions. Indeed, in her essay on Iran she again downplays what had been a key factor in her book on France, Russia and China: "By the 1970s, the Shah was far from being a U.S. puppet in any realm of domestic or foreign policy."<sup>127</sup> Here she is in oblique agreement with Halliday's conclusion that world-systemic factors are of much less importance; for Halliday, the regime's collapse

... demonstrated, in the first instance, the relative incapacity of the western powers to control events, even in a country where they had been so influential for decades. As in other apparently secure western allies—Portugal, Ethiopia—the events in Iran demonstrated the continuing primacy of the internal class struggle over the influence of imperialism once the opposition movement began to act.<sup>128</sup>

This issue should be looked at more deeply, for the world-systemic conjuncture was such that the revolution succeeded (thus the United States did play a role), and the dependent relation of Iran to the U.S. (*pace* Skocpol) and in the world-economy created the economic and political conditions that the population was responding to (*pace* Halliday).

The United States was indeed a crucial factor in the pre-revolutionary situation of Iran, as demonstrated in Chapter Eight, having surpassed all other foreign competitors, east and west, in replacing the British as the dominant outside power in the country. From Eisenhower's involvement in the 1953 CIA coup to Kennedy's in the appointment of 'Ali Amini and the land reform of the early 1960s to Nixon's "doctrine" of selling Iran any non-nuclear weapon system it could afford to police the Gulf and contain the Soviets, the United States had forged a strong relationship with the shah. This seemed to be under scrutiny when Jimmy Carter took office in early 1977 with an avowed foreign policy based on respect for human rights. Indeed, the shah expressed serious self-doubt, reportedly remarking to an aide on the eve of Carter's election, "It looks like we are not going to be around much longer."<sup>129</sup> In fact, Carter improbably developed a personal rapport with

<sup>127</sup> Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam," 281 note 4.

<sup>128</sup> Halliday, *Iran*, 319.

<sup>129</sup> Quoted in Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 4.

the shah in the course of visits in 1977 and the strategic relationship was never seriously questioned. Many observers suspected that a deal was made in late 1977: Iran would sell its oil at moderate prices (recall American concerns with inflation and recession at this time), in exchange for less criticism from the U.S. and continued weapons sales. Still, "liberalization" was on the shah's agenda in 1977, and while international opinion may have played the greater role in this, the desire to please the Carter administration was simultaneously served (and throughout the "troubles" of 1978 the United States expressed increasingly unrealistic hopes that liberalization would go forward). So however indirectly, the Carter human rights foreign policy did make the shah waver on the continued use of repression as part of domestic policy in 1977 and encouraged the letters and meetings of the intelligentsia that foreshadowed the revolutionary movement of the next year.<sup>130</sup>

During the revolution itself the United States continued to be a factor in several important ways. On the one hand, Carter's ill-timed public expressions of support for the shah, such as the New Year's Eve toast and the phone call just after the Bloody Friday massacres kept the United States in the popular imagination as a potent symbol of foreign domination tied to the shah ("The shah is Carter's dog!" was a revealing slogan). Further, serious policy splits plagued the effectiveness of the administration's actual support for the shah. While the State Department and later the embassy in Tehran realized that a genuine social revolution was building that could well oust the shah, the National Security Council led by Zbigniew Brzezinski was supported by Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and CIA chief Stansfield Turner in seeing the revolution as Soviet-orchestrated and subject to defeat if the army was used resolutely. These two opposed policies effectively cancelled each other out, making neither a workable approach. In either case the seriousness of the situation was not grasped until it was far too late; in Ambassador William Sullivan's case this was only in November 1978. Brzezinski meanwhile torpedoed any attempts to establish contact with Khomeini, thus guaranteeing antagonism between the movement and the United States. Carter himself followed no clear policy, and neither the opposition

<sup>130</sup> On these issues see Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 10; Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 341; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 500; Graham, *Iran*, 210; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 231-32, 234; and Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 226-33.

nor the shah was really supported. On December 7, for example, Carter simultaneously declared his confidence in the shah and stated that the United States would not interfere in Iran's affairs. The effectiveness of the oil strike may well have tipped the American hand reluctantly against the shah in late December, leading to support for his "vacation" abroad. The January 1979 mission of U.S. General Huyser to Iran with orders to aid the Bakhtiar government and possibly arrange a last minute coup to thwart Khomeini was the final chimera in Brzezinski's cold war scenario. When the National Security Advisor cabled Ambassador Sullivan on February 10 during the final uprising to arrange a coup, the latter's reply was "unprintable."<sup>131</sup>

This *non-action* of the key world power in the equation opened the door to the full play of the internal balance of forces, and this did help the revolution succeed, just as the American relationship to the shah from 1953 to 1978 undercut his legitimacy in the first place. The world-systemic conjuncture, then, was favorable to the triumph of the revolution in the sense that its core power did not aggressively intervene to prevent it. One may plausibly contend that the revolution would have succeeded regardless, but the cost would certainly have been higher in human lives, and unforeseen historical alternatives could have opened up (coup, intervention, different internal struggles, and so forth).

#### V.C. Iran's Revolution in Comparative Perspective

**External comparisons.** As we have by now seen, Iran's revolution does not fit very well into Skocpol's model of social revolutions derived from the cases of the French, Chinese and Russian upheavals. Without entering into the details of these cases here, it may still be suggested that the divergence may be attributable to the differences between large bureaucratic agrarian states and

<sup>131</sup> On the United States during the revolution, see Philip Taubman, "Washington Said to Have Weighed Backing Iranian Military in a Coup," in *New York Times*, April 20, 1980; Richard Cottam, "Review of Warren Christopher et al., *American Hostages in Iran: The Conduct of a Crisis*, and Gary Sick, *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran*," pp. 251-255 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, volume 19, number 2 (May 1987), and the references therein; Sullivan, "Dateline Iran," 177-86; Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion*, 248-60; Ashraf and Banuazizi, "The State, Classes and Modes of Mobilization," 12; Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 205; Bashiriyyeh, *The State and Revolution*, 120, 122 note 10, 123 note 24, 124 note 29, 124 note 33; Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, 253-54; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 523-24; Muslim Students, *Asnad-i lanah-i jasusi*, volume 7: 247; and Turner, "Iranian Oilworkers," 273, 281.

smaller, dependent Third World ones (Skocpol has taken this tack, although Iran does not fit into her Third World model either). It may also have to do with the very different place of each revolution on the continuum of world-historical time—late twentieth-century states face a very different set of political and economic constraints both internally and externally. Indeed, perhaps the Iranian case may lead future researchers to re-examine the cases of Skocpol's "Big Three" to highlight processes which she did not, such as the roles of urban classes in France and Russia, the effects of occupying a dependent place in the world-system (China, or Russia as semiperiphery), and, certainly, the great role played by political cultures of opposition in the making of revolutions.<sup>132</sup>

Indeed, with respect to the role of ideology, the religious component of the Iranian Revolution may not be as unique as most observers seem to think. Rouleau, for example, has pointed to the governments established by Savonarola in fifteenth-century Florence, Calvin in sixteenth-century Geneva, and, most significantly, the role of Puritanism in the English Revolution led by Cromwell in the seventeenth century.<sup>133</sup> At a greater level of abstraction the role of varieties of Marxism in Russia and China, and of Enlightenment ideals in France, is analogous. All great revolutions have had an ideological component.

The most apposite case for comparison with Iran is Nicaragua, which experienced a revolution in the same year of 1979. Both involved multi-class alliances, both succeeded against a military-type dictator, both benefitted from the absence of a strong American intervention. The two differed in the type of struggle that occurred—armed insurrection in Nicaragua cost four times as many lives in a country with one-tenth the population of Iran. But the similarities suggest that the same processes were at work, and the model of Diagram 9.1 can be applied in large measure to the Nicaraguan case. Thus one observes the consequences of dependent development and state repression, the elaboration of a political culture of opposition in Sandinismo, the economic downswing of the 1972 earthquake

<sup>132</sup> On this last point see Sewell, "Ideologies and Social Revolutions," and Theda Skocpol, "Cultural Idioms and Political Ideologies in the Revolutionary Reconstruction of State Power: A Rejoinder to Sewell," pp. 86-96 in *Journal of Modern History*, volume 57, number 1 (March 1985).

<sup>133</sup> Eric Rouleau, "Khomeini's Iran," pp. 1-20 in *Foreign Affairs*, volume 59, number 1 (Fall 1980), 1-2. Cf. also Maxime Rodinson, "Khomeini and 'The Primacy of Spirit'," pp. 23-25 in *New Outlook*, volume 22, number 4 (May/June 1979), 25, for the same parallels.

that was never overcome and the same world-systemic opportunity provided by the Carter human rights policy and internal divisions, all leading to a revolutionary outbreak carried by a broad populist alliance against the hated dictator Somoza. These striking similarities suggest that our model may be better suited to the class of twentieth-century Third World revolutions than those of Skocpol and others. Cuba, Chile and Mexico are further cases worth examining in this light, to name a few.

**Internal comparisons.** Comparison of the Iranian Revolution with the major earlier instances of social change in twentieth-century Iran is also instructive. In both the 1905 Constitutional Revolution and the 1951-53 oil nationalization struggle urban multi-class populist alliances formed, and for essentially the same reasons as in the recent revolution: the ongoing complexity of Iranian social structure, the impact of the West resulting in a situation of dependence, and the elaboration of several political cultures of resistance to this experience. These factors have made the populist alliance a natural social base for movements against the state and foreign domination. But why was the 1978-79 instance more successful than its predecessors? One factor was the strength and solidity of the 1978 populist alliance, especially compared with 1951-53 and 1960-63. Massive repression did not deter it (as on August 19, 1953 and June 5, 1963); the movement found effective new tactics after Bloody Friday, such as the mass strikes and huge demonstrations. The components of the populist alliance also worked better together—the ulama played their most militant role in 1978, and all secular forces worked with them, compared with the ulama's ambivalence in 1905-11, inactivity in 1951-53 and isolation in 1963. The goal of the movement—to actually change the state radically by abolishing the monarchy and setting up a republic—also distinguished 1978 from earlier movements. In this respect the political cultures of opposition were undoubtedly more effective in articulating grievances and mobilizing the population. Finally, the world-systemic conjuncture was immeasurably more favorable than in 1911 when Russian intervention brought about a counter-revolution or in 1953 when the CIA organized its counter-coup. So while the same theoretical factors were present in the outbreak of the three major social movements of twentieth-century Iran, differences in the way these factors played themselves out can account for differences in outcomes.

## V.D. Aftermath

The reflections above raise a final analytic question: how different *has* the outcome of the Iranian Revolution been in the context of Iran's history of social change? Ending not in defeat but in the overthrow of the monarchy and the end of the close relationship with the United States, the revolution would seem to have escaped the inevitable failure of the basic pattern of social movements in Iran. On the other hand, it has resulted in a bloody foreign war with Iraq and a crumbling of the multi-class alliance that made the revolution. In this concluding section we will not enter into much detail on developments in Iran since 1979, but rather make a few analytic remarks in light of the framework adopted in the present study.

**The breakdown of the populist alliance.** The new regime moved swiftly to consolidate its position in society, but typically, this signalled the swift fragmentation of the diverse coalition that had made the revolution. The major steps in the institutionalization of the new state were the March 30, 1979 referendum abolishing the monarchy and establishing the Islamic Republic of Iran; the election of a majlis on August 3, 1979; the passing of a new constitution in November 1979; and the election of Bani Sadr as president on January 25, 1980. In the meantime, on November 4, 1979 crowds seized the American embassy in Tehran touching off the 444-day hostage crisis, and a year later, in September 1980, Iraq invaded the oil province of Khuzistan, initiating the bloody Gulf war.

The ulama who supported Khomeini as supreme leader of the revolution moved quickly to gain control of the state during this period. The Islamic Republican Party (IRP), formed in May 1979, gained a majority in the first majlis and controlled the process of drafting the constitution which gave wide powers to Khomeini as the leading Islamic jurist. The hostage crisis provided an occasion for forcing Bazargan to step down as prime minister, seen as tainted by contacts with the United States. The ulama astutely maneuvered the left against secular and Islamic liberals during this period, forcing Bani Sadr to flee Iran in June 1981 over differences with the IRP. The Mujahidin were the next group isolated and defeated when they attempted to mobilize the population against the government in the summer of 1981. Mujahidin bombs killed a president, prime minister and 27 IRP majlis deputies, but failed to spark an uprising and the organization was subsequently forced completely

underground through arrests, torture and execution of its members. The Tudeh and Fada'ian continued to support the government as anti-imperialist through all of this, until the time came for arrests and executions of their leaderships beginning in 1983-84.

Of the classes who participated in the revolutionary coalition, only the ulama, bazaar classes and to a degree urban marginals received tangible benefits. In addition to the defeat of all secular parties, the intelligentsia saw the universities closed for two years as part of an Islamization campaign; at least 200,000 of its members left Iran from 1979 to 1982. The working class's gains in wages and control over production in 1979 were later lost as their independent shuras were replaced by Islamic associations, management returned to run workplaces, and war and recession affected their well-being. While urban marginals were appealed to as a key IRP constituency, and a slight shift in their share of income took place, many hardships of housing, food and jobs remained; Tehran's population swelled from 4.5 million to 6 million people a year after the revolution. Women were dismissed from schools and offices, and changes in the family law lowered the marriage age from 18 to 13 while making divorce easier for men. In the countryside, peasant land seizures were discouraged or reversed by the army, while the Kurds were militarily repressed and Qashqa'is had their chiefs executed in 1980 for plotting against Khomeini.<sup>134</sup> The populist alliance, then, as in 1909-11 and 1953, split soon after power was achieved, and only a few of its constituent social classes and political organizations can be said to have obtained what they struggled for in the revolution.

**Economy, dependency, world-system.** No sooner had Iran's economy begun to restart itself after the strike-interrupted year of the revolution than the war with Iraq again dealt it a severe shock which lasted throughout the 1980s and whose effects would be felt well beyond that. War brought destruction of housing, roads, infrastructure and oil installations; diversion of funds from development to the military effort; and the closing of factories due to lack of spare parts, drops in

<sup>134</sup> On these social classes since the revolution, see Bill, "Power and Religion," 29; Moghadam, "Accumulation: Strategy," 330-38; Bayat, *Workers and Revolution*, 100-102; Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution*, 116-17; Abrahamian, "Iran's Turbanned Revolution," 94-95; Kashani interview, tape 3; Hooglund, *Land and Revolution*, 151; Turner, "Iranian Oilworkers," 287; and Garthwaite, *Khans and shahs*, 141.

consumption capacity and shortages of labor as workers were ordered to the front. Agriculture has persisted as a major obstacle to better standards of living. Despite a good harvest in 1979, production slowed again after 1980 and food imports continued to run up a large bill. Migration to the cities continued unabated, compounded by the war. The central oil industry benefitted from production cuts in 1979-80 and a doubling of prices in that period, but prices fell drastically again in the 1980s and dependence on oil revenues remained characteristic of the political economy.<sup>135</sup>

Some observers, such as Amirahmadi, felt that revolutionary Iran might follow a "non-capitalist" path of development, while many, such as Samir Amin, thought that "Iran had "de-linked" from the world system, or at any rate, that its economy had ceased to be a part of the world capitalist order."<sup>136</sup> But in terms of the theoretical perspectives of the present study, these are dubious claims. Dependency remain a deep structural problem for Iran—dependence on oil revenues, on Western technology, on food imports and on arms, to name a few significant items. While it may be argued that the hostage crisis had the short-term benefit of keeping American intervention at bay, Iran was soon turning secretly to the United States and Israel for arms to keep the war going against Iraq. And reconstruction of the battered economy will undoubtedly require European and Japanese involvement, if not, in the long run, American participation as well. The declaration of an Islamic Republic does not annul Iran's status as a peripheral country in the world-system with a dependent capitalist form of development.

**The new political culture.** The task of converting the strength of populist Islam from a revolutionary force to a blueprint for society raised many urgent problems for the economy and polity. In part the dilemma was put off by displacing it to meet the perceived threat of American intervention with the embassy takeover, and the call to export the Islamic revolution that was one cause of the Iran-Iraq war. These episodes allowed the government to consolidate its hold on the population by continuing to pluck the emotional strings of martyrdom and struggle against evil oppressors.

<sup>135</sup> For some economic data, see Pesaran, "The System of Dependent Capitalism," 5:4-17.

<sup>136</sup> Moghadam, "Populist Revolution," 20, citing Hooshang Amirahmadi, "The Non-Capitalist Way of Development," in *Review of Radical Political Economics*, volume 19, number 1 (1987), and Samir Amin, *La Déconnexion: pour sortir du système mondiale* (Paris: Seuil, 1986).

Khumaini, for example, tried to lower material expectations as a way of de-linking from the West and encouraging religious sensibilities: "... he told President Bani-Sadr that the American embargo during the hostage crisis would not be detrimental to the population: "In the time of the Prophet, they ate only one date a day".<sup>137</sup> In the process, the liberating potential of the versions of Islamic political culture espoused by Shari'ati, Taliqani, Bazargan and Bani Sadr were either distorted or narrowly circumscribed. The political atmosphere and practical results of IRP rule were neither democratic, progressive, liberal or socialist.

The clearest evidence of this was the effort by the new regime to distinguish itself from Iran's past social movements. Shaikh Fazlullah Nuri, the monarchist ayatullah hanged by the constitutionalists in 1909, was rehabilitated as a martyr. Conversely, Mussadiq was downgraded as a heroic figure, with Khumaini averring "They say he nationalised [Iranian] oil. So What? We did not want oil, we did not want independence, we wanted Islam."<sup>138</sup> Yet one million Iranians went to Ahmabad on a pilgrimage to celebrate Mussadiq's memory in March 1979. The narrowing of the new hegemonic political culture after 1979 may have been as predictable as that the populist alliance itself would split into its constituent elements. It likewise suggests the degree to which the triumph of the 1978 revolution has been mitigated by failures to learn the lessons of the past. The thrust of the present study has been to capture for historical memory and sociological reflection the multiple meanings and strengths—as well as failures—of these three mass movements in twentieth-century Iran.

<sup>137</sup> Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 188 note 1.

<sup>138</sup> Quoted by Katuzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 362. See also, on Mussadiq's image, Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution," 198; Abrahamian, "Iran's Turbanned Revolution," 97; and Diba, *Mohammad Mossadeq*, 195; and on Nuri, Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 356-57.

### **Conclusions:**

#### **The History of Social Change in Iran—a Theoretical Reprise**

Having traversed the history of social change in Iran from 1500 to 1979 in the course of this study, it now falls to us to highlight certain results—empirical, methodological and theoretical—in terms of their contribution to our knowledge of the topics and approaches involved.

#### **Social Structure and Social Change in Iran: Substantive Results**

Let us begin by briefly recalling the empirical findings of Chapters Two through Nine, keeping in mind that certain analytic elements will be added to these points in the sections on method and theory below.

**Social structure and social change in Safavid Iran, 1500-1800.** The Iranian social formation at its seventeenth-century height under Shah 'Abbas was a hybrid of three modes of production, which may be termed the pastoral-nomadic, the peasant crop-sharing and the urban petty-commodity modes of production. The Safavid shahs had hegemonic positions in the state and economy, tapping surplus production by tribespeople, peasants and urban producers, and enjoying military, political and ideological paramouncy. Other elite groups such as tribal chiefs and urban ulama (clergy) controlled far fewer resources (the former primarily military-political-economic, the latter ideological) in the seventeenth century and could not challenge the shahs' control. The economy was predominantly agricultural (nomadic and settled) but there was significant regional and international trade in products such as textiles (carpets and silks), porcelain and metalware. Profits from this trade were shared by the shah, local merchants and the Armenian merchant community. Commercial contacts opened in the early seventeenth century with the Dutch and English East India Companies, who traded in Iran on terms negotiated freely by the shahs. In no sense could seventeenth-century Iran be

considered *dependent* on the West; rather it was part of the *external arena* of the emerging capitalist world economy.

In 1722 the Safavid dynasty was abruptly overthrown by rebellious Afghan tribesmen. The causes of its decline, however, were long-term, and were traced to an intertwined set of economic, political and ideological crises that structurally undermined the state. These included: 1) the results of provincial reforms in the seventeenth century which weakened the military preparedness of the outlying regions by removing tribal chiefs from the administration in favor of centralized control, 2) a fiscal crisis ensuing partly from decreased prosperity in the provinces and rising state expenditures, and partly from inflationary pressures emanating from Europe and the Ottoman Empire, and 3) alienation of tribal supporters due to increasing royal absolutism, and of national and religious minorities (Georgians, Armenians, Sunni Arabs, Kurds and Afghans) due to growing intolerance on the part of the Shi'i ulama.

The Afghans were in turn routed in 1729 by the tribal leader Nadir, who made himself shah in 1736 and ruled till 1747, engaging in wars of territorial reconquest and foreign conquest as far as India. Tribal civil wars continued throughout the eighteenth century, with a period of relative stability in southern Iran under Karim Khan Zand till 1779, and the rise of a new dynasty, the Qajars, in 1795. Throughout this period trade contacts with the West shrank, tribal groups encroached on the sedentary agricultural sector, and wars reduced the population. Royal authority and control decentralized considerably. Social change in the eighteenth century remained almost exclusively *endogenous* in nature; the East India companies were largely passive onlookers as tribal groups struggled for control of their own regions and vied for state power. The significance of the eighteenth century was as a reversal of development of decisive proportions, for it weakened the Iranian state and economy just as a crucial moment in its history was approaching.

**Social structure and social change in Qajar Iran, 1800-1925.** During the nineteenth century, the Iranian economy "crossed the threshold of dependency," re-oriented toward England and its colony India in the southern Gulf area, and toward Tsarist Russia in the increasingly more dynamic north (based on Tabriz and the new capital, Tehran). The Qajar armies suffered military defeats at

the hands of Russia in 1813 and 1828 and to England in 1857, leading to trade advantages, territory and political control for the Europeans. This situation can be characterized for the first time as one of dependence on the West, with the presence of two European powers precluding the outcome of colonialism but limiting development through their rivalry. The three modes of production remained in place, with perhaps some slight shifting in their relative importance—beginnings of a decline in the scope of pastoral nomadism, and recoveries in the levels of activity in both the peasant crop-sharing and urban petty-commodity sectors, although by the end of this period foreign manufactures were displacing Iranian handicraft workers to a great extent. Alongside the older modes of production, a small, new capitalist sector emerged, with some unique historical features: foreign capitalists rather than Iranians tended to predominate, and Iran's working class was formed in large measure outside the country, as migrant labor in Russia. Moreover, at the turn of the twentieth century, Iran's principal exports were raw cotton and silk, cereals and fruit, tobacco, opium and carpets; its principal imports were cotton cloth, sugar, tea and metal goods—the trading profile of a *peripheral* supplier of raw materials in the world economy (oil would be discovered in 1908 and begin to play a larger role by the 1920s). The Qajar state was independent in name only as its policy options were increasingly determined by the Russian and to a lesser extent, English, governments and banks.

The dissatisfaction of the politically articulate urban classes—merchants, artisans, intellectuals and ulama—with the internal tyranny of the Qajars and the external domination of the foreigners was signalled first by the Tobacco Rebellion in 1891 and then by the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. These classes formed a populist alliance with other sectors, including the working class, each interpreting the crisis through their own political cultural filters. After the initial granting of a constitution and establishment of a parliament by the popular forces, internal divisions (particularly among the ulama and the large merchants) and external military intervention by the Russians forced the majlis to accede to the restoration of Qajar autocracy. The political stalemate and economic chaos that attended this struggle during and after WWI were among the most important factors in the military coup of 1921 (assisted and supported by the British) which brought an obscure military officer, Reza Pahlavi, to the throne in 1925, ending the Qajar dynasty.

**Social structure and social change in Pahlavi Iran, 1925-1979.** Under a centralizing authoritarian state and fueled by a new petroleum-based economy, Iran embarked on a dependent capitalist course in the 1930s. In modes of production terms, the twentieth century has witnessed massive erosion of the pastoral nomadic sector and the gradual "capitalization" of both agriculture and industry. Under Reza Shah the forced settlement of nomads was the most dramatic expression of this, while a more substantial groundwork for the capitalist mode of production was laid by infrastructural projects (railroads, roads, dams) and some light industrial manufacturing. Urban petty-commodity production in the bazaar and peasant crop-sharing continued to predominate otherwise.

From the Allied invasion and abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 until the fall of the popular, nationalist Mussadiq government in 1953 Iran experienced a marked loosening of autocratic monarchic controls and went through a series of intense political conflicts which nevertheless failed to achieve their goals, including the separatist popular and socialist republics in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan in 1945-46 and the oil nationalization struggle led by the National Front and Mussadiq government from 1951 to 1953. Each had important external as well as internal dimensions: Muhammad Reza Pahlavi returned as shah in August 1953 with United States CIA support, some clerical backing, and mobilization of street mobs as the nationalization movement fragmented—some ulama and secular nationalists left the coalition, while the Tudeh Party never fully supported it on the left. Thus was missed (as in the eighteenth century) another alternative pathway to national independence and development.

After the coup d'état a new period of Iranian dependence on the West was inaugurated, now centered around a special political, economic and military relationship with the United States. Significant direct private capital investment by Western multinationals flowed into the country in the 1950s and 1960s, undermining petty-commodity artisanal producers and tradespeople in favor of larger-scale capitalist production and importing/exporting. The shah's land "reform" in the 1960s turned crop-sharing peasants into small-holders and/or landless wage workers as large-scale capitalist agribusinesses emerged, unleashing a flood of migrants into the cities. Foreign exchange earnings from oil increased state power in the 1970s, permitting the shah to purchase billions of dollars worth

of American weaponry and technology. Iran, which appeared to be making a bid to enter the semi-periphery under the Pahlavi state's grandiose industrial, agricultural, military and strategic plans, entered into serious economic recession in the middle and later 1970s, triggered by lower oil revenues and overly ambitious and military-oriented development plans, resulting in unemployment, high inflation, a housing crisis, new loans from the West and deepening forms of social unrest, all of which provided the immediate backdrop to the revolutionary movement of 1978-79.

The opposition drew on several political cultures of resistance to the shah, including 1) the "fundamentalist" Islam of Khomeini, 2) the radical Islam of Dr. 'Ali Shari'ati, 3) the armed struggle approach of a) the Islamic Mujahidin and b) the Marxist Feda'ian, 4) the moderate Islamic reformism of the Liberation Movement of Iran (led by Mehdi Bazargan, among others), and 5) the "traditional" secular center and left, the former composed of the remnants of Mossadegh's National Front and the latter represented by the Tudeh Party. These organizations and the heterogeneous social forces which they mobilized forced the shah from power through an unprecedented combination of massive unarmed street demonstrations, a determined general strike lasting several months and a brief guerilla uprising in February 1979. The state crumbled in the face of a strengthened populist alliance and uncertain support from the United States. The Islamic Republic which followed continued to face problems stemming from dependency and the complexity of social structure in Iran, topics briefly touched on in Chapter Nine.

### **Comparative Dimensions and Methodological Considerations**

**External comparisons.** In this study, comparisons of several kinds have been made. At several points in the analysis, the case of Iran was compared and contrasted with those of other countries. In Part One, the social structure of Safavid Iran was compared with the Islamic empires of the Mughals in India and the Ottomans in Turkey. Despite the presence of the same three modes of production in each, the greater proportion of tribespeople in Iran, combined with the greater impact of Europe on India and the Ottomans, explained the endogenous form taken by social change in Iran (the eighteenth century's civil wars) and the exogenous changes in India (conquest by the English)

and the Ottomans (military decline vis-a-vis Europe). In the nineteenth century, the differences of Iran with her otherwise most similar neighbors again stand out—the Anglo-Russian rivalry put brakes on development as each sought to block concessions to the other, whereas India and even the fading Ottomans centralized more successfully, the former under colonial control, the latter, under strong European pressure.

In the Pahlavi period since 1925, several brief comparisons were made to highlight certain features of the Iranian case. Rough analogies were observed between the centralizing state of Reza Shah in Iran and Kemal Atatürk's modernization of the new Turkish polity, although Atatürk was more successful in containing the ulama and relied more on political forces in society at large than Reza did, who merely compressed these until they exploded after his abdication in 1941. The striking similarities between the coups in Iran in 1953 and Chile in 1973 were mentioned in Chapter Seven, suggesting the underlying combination of internal contradictions and external intervention at work in both cases, in addition to a number of secondary similarities (nationalization of a key resource, popularity of Mussadiq and Allende). The dependent capitalist development of Iran in the 1960 and 1970s was found broadly equivalent to that of its Middle Eastern neighbors Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan, but significantly less than that of Brazil or the East Asian cases of Taiwan and South Korea, making possible the judgment that Iran did not rise to a semiperipheral position in the world-economy. Finally, the model of revolution elaborated in Chapter Nine permitted us to see similarities between the Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions of 1979, and hinted at new ways of interpreting social revolutions more generally. For the most part, these comparisons with cases outside Iran confirmed and reinforced the analysis of processes of change in Iran in light of the theories adopted in this study.

**Internal comparisons.** A second type of comparison used was of an internal type, and here a historical methodology turned on a single case yielded much of theoretical interest. Again, both similarities and contrastive patterns turned up. For example, a certain parallelism between the rise and fall of the seventeenth-century Safavids and the twentieth-century Pahlavis may be noted: both dynasties represented peaks of national economic power, dominated very much by the shahs at the

top. At a certain point each reached developmental limits and collapsed precipitously. But the differences are equally instructive: the fall of the Safavids was traced to internal processes and conflicts between the state and upper classes, while that of the Pahlavis involved an external dimension (dependence on the United States) that caused the withdrawal of middle and lower class support. The outcome—a social revolution—was thus attributed to a key difference in the two situations—dependent development and its consequences.

Comparative historical reflection on the repeated mass movements of the twentieth century also resulted in fresh conceptual insights. The formation and dynamics of a multi-class urban populist alliance, first noted in the case of the 1905-1911 Constitutional Revolution, recurred in the 1951-53, 1960-63 and 1977-79 social movements as well. Behind each of these we found the complexity of Iran's social structure in modes of production terms, the impact of the world-system on that structure, and the responsiveness of specific political cultures of opposition to the state and outside powers. In Chapter Nine the reasons for the apparent success of the latest version of the populist alliance were suggested—unusual unanimity among its constituent classes and groups, combined with a unique opportunity in the world-systemic conjuncture—and the continuing problems faced by the new regime were readily identifiable in terms of Iran's ongoing processes of dependent development, world-systemic pressures and contending political cultures. Internal comparison, then, has proven a source both of inductively generated new concepts, such as the populist alliance, and a further test of theoretical approaches to social change.

**Considerations on method.** Thus a number of methodological strategies have been simultaneously pursued in the course of this study. One way of seeing this is as a combination of inductive method to form new analytic concepts and deductive work to illustrate theoretical frameworks.<sup>1</sup> Another approach is to contend that this study has both been a way a testing general theories and using concepts to develop a meaningful historical interpretation of a single case. It also suggests for future research (but does not employ) a third strategy—that of analyzing causal regularities in history

<sup>1</sup> See Victoria E. Bonnell, "The Uses of Theory, Concepts and Comparisons in Historical Sociology," pp. 156-173 in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, volume 22, number 2 (April 1980), 164ff.

(one could rigorously investigate the applicability of the framework used here for Iran in a wider context, say, the Middle East and South Asia since 1500).<sup>2</sup> Each of these several strategies flows into the others, and the full cycle of them can shed light on a whole range of problems in historical-comparative sociological inquiry.<sup>3</sup>

A second broad methodological contribution of this study has revolved around the utility of a dialectical methodology for empirical social science, that is, one which takes seriously both structural constraints and human agency in the making of social movements. Taking as models the reflections of Marx in "The Eighteenth Brumaire" and Sartre's *Search for a Method*, this approach was used concretely in many ways in the dissertation: in the notion of intertwined political, economic and ideological crises used to explain the falls of the Safavids, Qajars and Pahlavis; in the diptych-configuration that ordered each of the three parts, with chapters on social structural changes—Two, Four, Six and Eight—followed by chapters on social movements—Three, Five, Seven and Nine; and in the model of social revolution arrived at in the last chapter. Each of these studied the interplay among large, seemingly impersonal structures (modes of production, dependent development) and more clearly humanly-created processes (social movements of several types). One proposed link between the two was the role accorded political cultures in mediating "objective" social relations through the "subjective" experiences of groups and classes (in other words, the subjective and objective mutually constitute each other). The two types of analysis—structural and agentic—must be undertaken together to give a fully satisfying account of social change.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> These three strategies are discussed by Theda Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology," pp. 356-391 in Theda Skocpol, editor, *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). I have begun to test for causal regularities over part of this period in my essay, "Modes of Production, European Impact and Social Change in the Pre-Capitalist Middle East and South Asia: A Comparative Survey of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries."

<sup>3</sup> See Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," pp. 174-197 in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, volume 22, number 2 (April 1980), 196-97.

<sup>4</sup> This is the thrust of some of the best recent social theory, notably the work of Anthony Giddens on structuration: see his *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984).

### Theories: Findings, Refinements

These considerations debouch onto the final area of inquiry of the present study—the status of the leading theories in the fields of development and social change. This study has argued that five basic approaches are central to understanding these problems—the dependency paradigm, world-system theory, modes of production analysis, the nature of the state, and political cultures of opposition and legitimation. Let us briefly assess each in turn in light of the findings.

Dependency, in the more sophisticated version formulated by Cardoso, Faletto and Evans, has been found of great value for analysis of a major Middle Eastern case, thus extending the domain of the theory into a new region of the Third World. The concept of dependent development, used in adjudicating rancorous debates on the extent and limits of structural economic change in Qajar Iran (1800-1925), under Reza Shah (1925-41) and under his son (1953-77), proved an illuminating way to reconcile conflicting accounts and specify the content and reality of this mixed type of development. Moreover, the crossing of the threshold of dependency in the nineteenth century decisively marked off the pre-capitalist from the more recent periods of Iranian history and was a key to understanding why social movements since about 1890 took the anti-foreign, anti-state forms they did. The dependency paradigm, overall, proved an adequate guiding thread to the whole range of questions raised in this study.

Iran was likewise put on the map of world-system theory in this dissertation, as we traced the country's halting progress from external arena in the seventeenth century to periphery in the nineteenth. The most interesting empirical finding observed was the stagnation of Iran in the eighteenth century, conceptualized as a decline in the external arena; the Safavids had been too strong to be colonized and dominated by the European core, but were unable to compete with it in the emerging peripheries of Asia. Trade links with Europe were accorded a secondary role in the fall of the Safavids. Disrupted during the civil wars of the eighteenth century, they were decisively reformed in the nineteenth as Iran was converted into a periphery of the British core and Russian semi-periphery. In the twentieth, the shah's ambitious attempts to draw his nation into the semiperiphery fell rather short, and this failure was both cause and consequence of a precarious political economy

that foundered onto revolution. Wallerstein's system, then, while undoubtedly an incomplete perspective on development from the point of view of Iran, was nevertheless found conceptually adequate to the task of explaining the relevant parts of Iran's experience when called upon.

Modes of production analysis, which has not been widely applied empirically, has been found of great utility in laying bare social structure in a Third World country, and proven far more nuanced in the result it obtained than trying to fit the Iranian case into some simple box such as feudalism. It allowed us to construct the diagrams on social structure in 1630, 1800, 1914, 1941 and 1977 that in turn provided the keys to understanding the twists and turns of class alliances in the social movements, and to measure the impact on class structure over time of dependency and world-systemic pressures. These insights are I think a major finding of this study which needs to be tested more widely in other Third World cases, and perhaps even for pre-capitalist Europe, and may someday alter considerably the way we think about pre-capitalist social structure and social change.

With respect to the nature of the state, we were able to account for the strong position of the Safavid shahs in terms of their ability to tap an economic surplus in several modes of production, and the fragmented situation of the upper classes—chiefs, landlords, large merchants. This source of power continued into the twentieth century with the discovery of oil, and the establishment of a stronger state based on military coercive force. In Iran the state was very loosely associated with the person of the shah and thus conflated rather directly with a part of the ruling class (the royal family).<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, this makes the Iranian case rather unique (strictly comparable only to other monarchies); on the other, the form of dictatorship is shared widely in the contemporary Third World. Moreover, the close association of the state with foreign powers in sharing responsibility for dependency made it vulnerable to social movements from below in times of crisis. These several findings have made it possible to flesh out Skocpol's and others' insistence on the political significance of the state with economic and ideological considerations as well.

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<sup>5</sup> Though at times of more open democratic struggle, such as 1905-11 and 1951-53, we analyzed the state as consisting of several institutions (bureaucracy, royal family and army) whose relationship with other social forces and each other determined in large measure the outcomes of social movements.

This raises the final conceptual issue of political cultures of opposition and legitimation. These proved to be the major missing link in all the models of development and social change considered above. In this study, close attention was paid to the value orientations of the many social classes and groups active on both sides of movements for change, and proved invaluable in understanding both the reasons for revolutionary outbreaks and the subsequent splits in the revolutionary coalitions. Political culture was shown to be crucial in mediating structural analysis with historical accounts of social movements. The legitimation problems of the dynasties which followed the Safavids were likewise a factor in their eventual failures to consolidate power in the long run.

The major theoretical contribution of this study has been to effect a synthesis of these partial perspectives on development and social change. The reader will be the best judge of the success of this project. The following features of theoretical synthesis may be noted: 1) the problem of integrating the dependency, world-systems and modes of production perspectives to solve the puzzle of how internal and external dimensions of development and class formation can be elucidated; 2) the linking of these perspectives on development with considerations on the state and political cultures to construct a comprehensive framework for studying social change; and 3) the model of revolution that this yielded in Chapter Nine as well as the general approach this suggests as to how social structure is related to social movements.

Finally, mention may be made of a number of new *concepts* which have been constructed, more or less inductively, in the course of doing this work. Part One on the Safavid period generated the notions of intertwined political, economic and ideological crises, and sectoral conflicts among elite contenders for power in pre-capitalist social formations. In the study of social movements in Qajar Iran, the concept of a stalemate of social forces (among state, social movements, foreign powers) was introduced to explain the 1921 coup d'état, and a major conceptual innovation, the existence of an urban, multi-class populist alliance, was arrived at to characterize the dynamics of the Constitutional Revolution. This concept was put to work again in Part Three on the Pahlavi era to shed light on the social movements of 1951-53, 1960-63 and 1977-79. It may prove useful in future research on social movements elsewhere in place and time, reposing as it does in large measure on

the greater analytic precision generated by the modes of production approach to social structure. A secondary conceptual line of argument for the 1925-79 period was in terms of successive compressions of social forces under strong centralizing states from 1925 to 1941 and 1953 to 1977, followed by explosions of social forces when the world-system permitted and internal contradictions built up in 1941-53 and 1977-79. All of these concepts served us as middle-range heuristic devices for ordering historical materials, and while they were arrived at for the most part inductively through empirical analysis, they can alternatively be accounted for in terms of the theoretical perspectives employed.

In conclusion, this study has represented an attempt to illuminate Iranian history in sociological perspective as a sequence or series of *tragic* attempts at social change—repeated mass movements which have ended either in foreign intervention, or, in the case of the 1978 revolution, in foreign war and internal repression. Homa Katouzian concluded his 1979 study with the words: "It is to be hoped that for once, after centuries, the dialectic of Iranian history will yield a progressive synthesis."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the promise of those days has not come to pass, and remains only a hope. Iran's *history*, we have argued, offers little prospect of a progressive outcome, only the likelihood of further courageous attempts at change.

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<sup>6</sup> Katouzian, *The Political Economy of Modern Iran*, 182.

**Appendix I**  
**Illustrations**

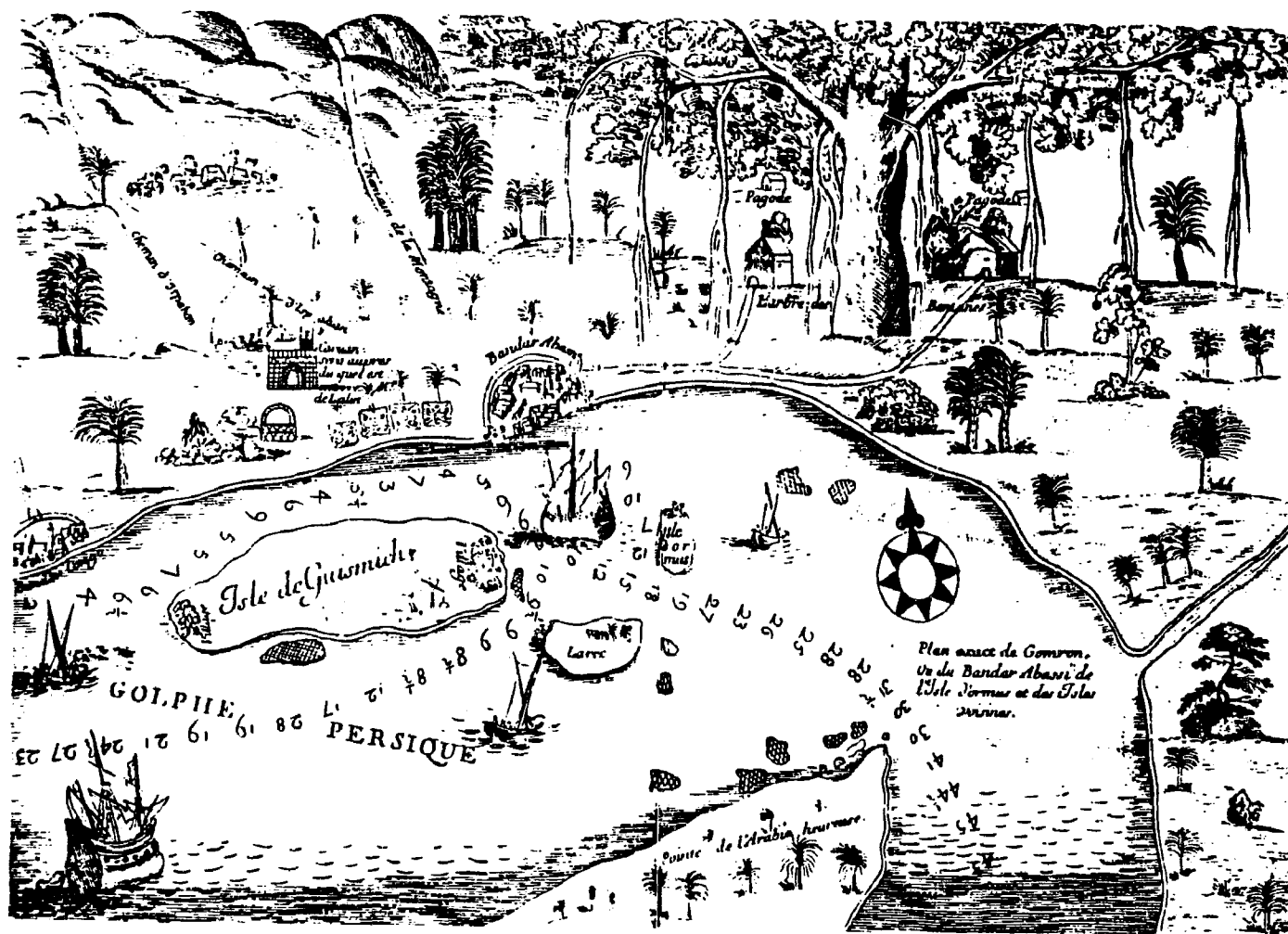
1. View of Isfahan. From Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Voyages en Perse (Paris: Les Libraires Associés, 1964), p. 202.



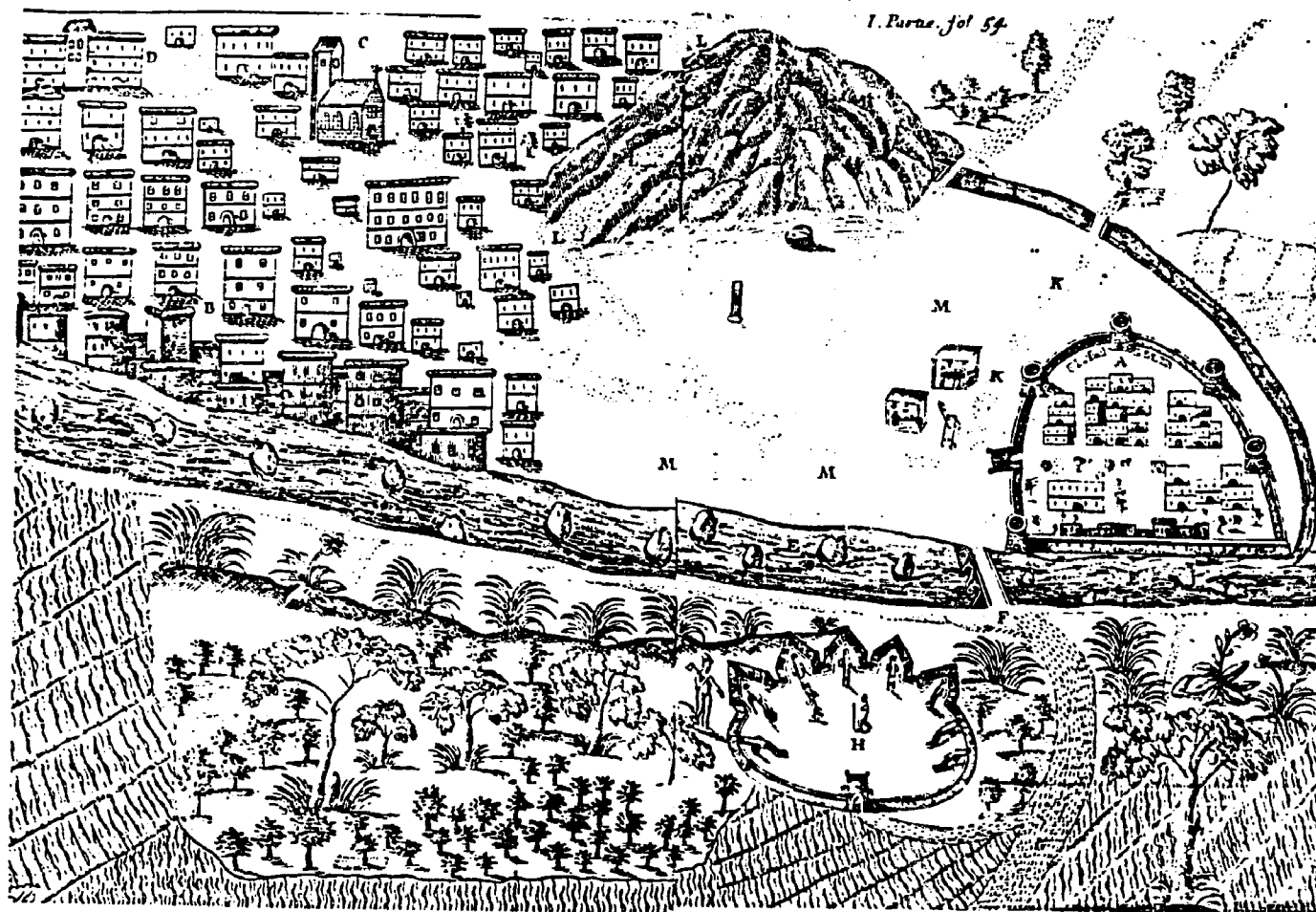
2. The Royal Square of Isfahan. From Tavernier, Voyages en Perse, p. 202.



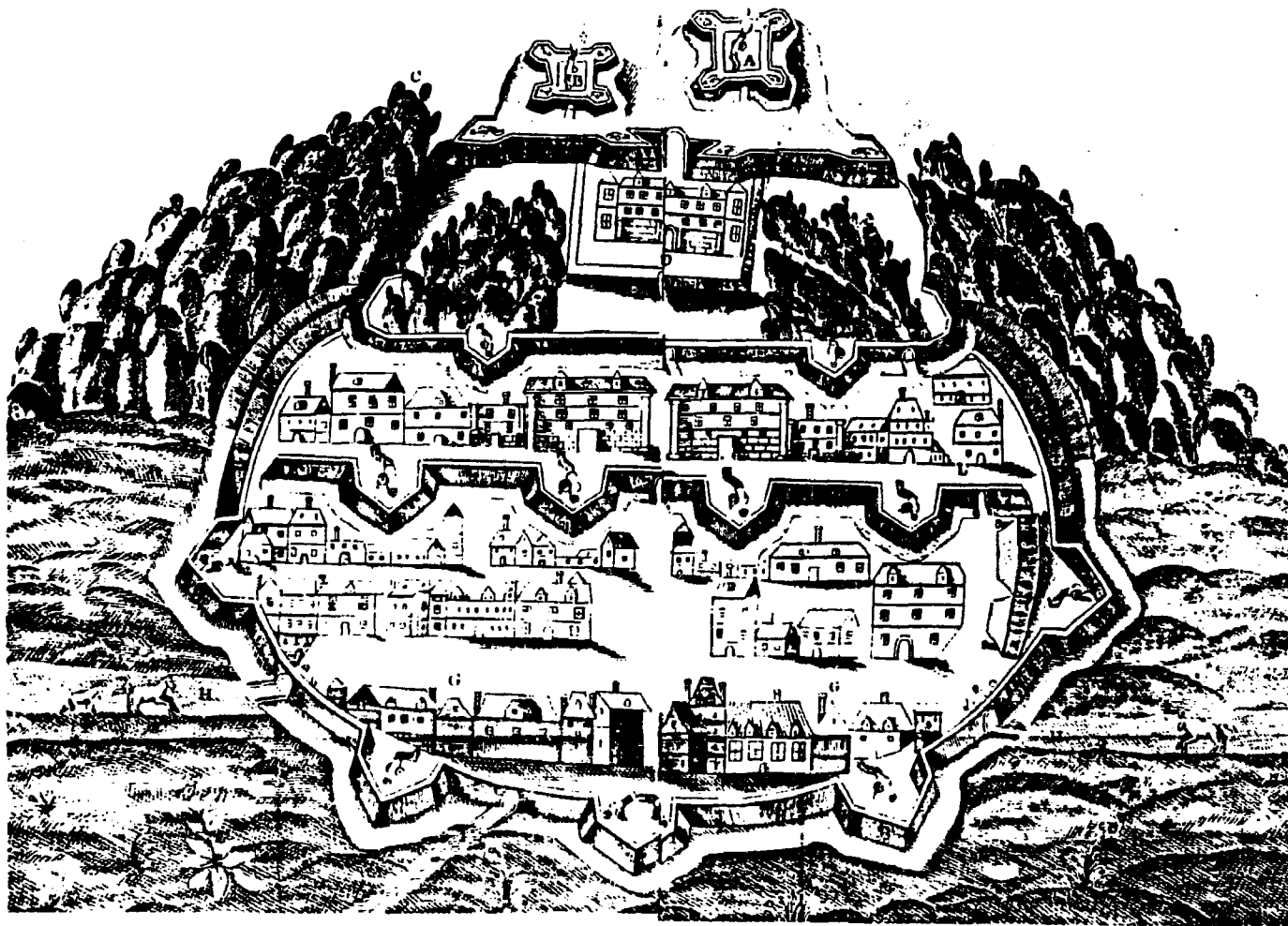
3. Plan of Bandar 'Abbas. From Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse*, p. 330. The 'Banyan Tree' shows the role played by the Indian merchant community in the life of the port.



4. Plan of Erivan. From Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse*, p. 330.



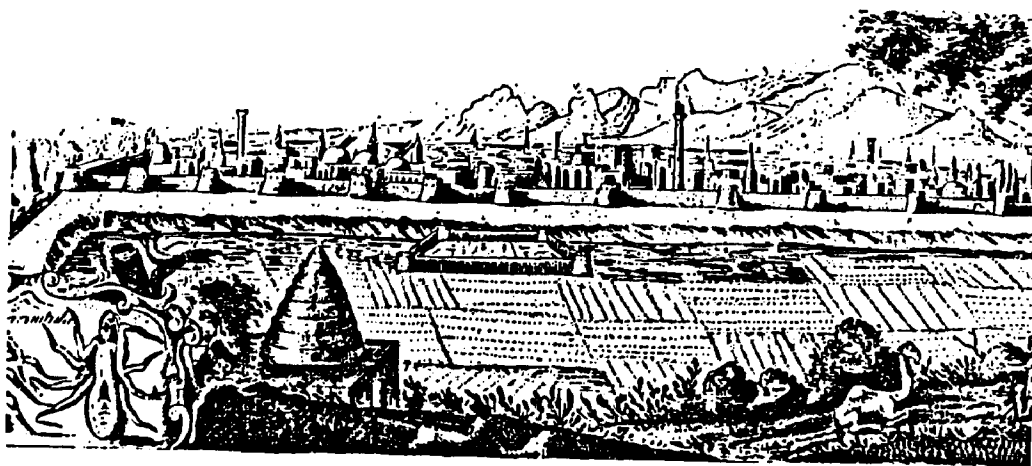
5. Plan of the City and Fortress of Qandahar. From Tavernier, *Voyages en Perse*, p. 330.



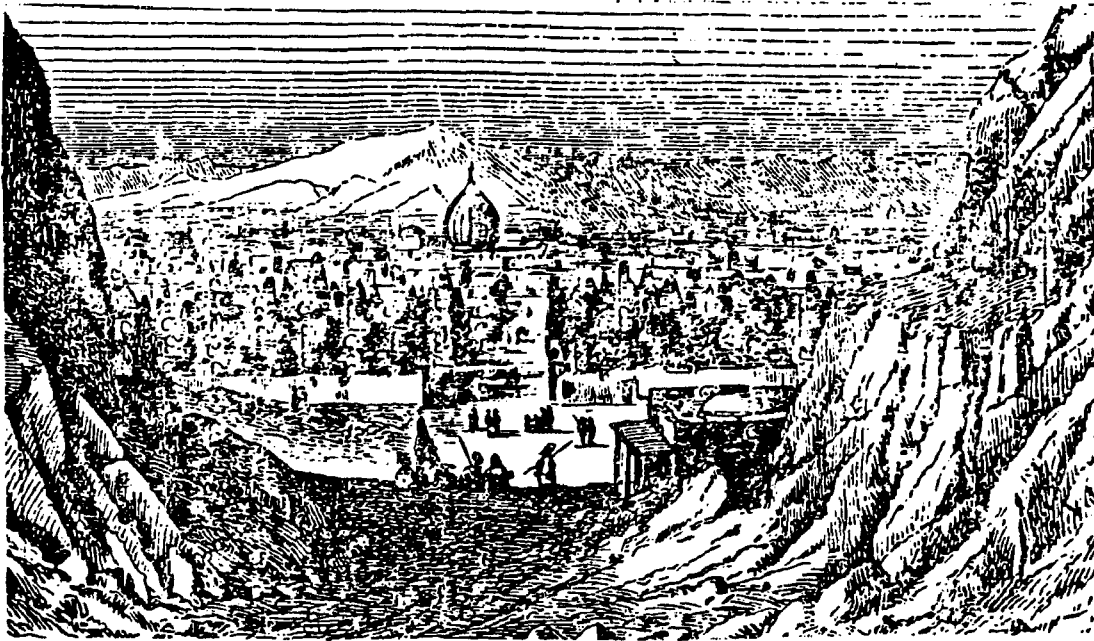
6.A. Ardabil. From Muhammad Ibrahim Bastani Parizi, Siyasat va iqtisad-i asr-i Safaviyyeh (Tehran, 1348/1969), p. 125. The original is from Olearius's travel book.



6.B Kashan. From Bastani Parizi, Siyasat va iqtisad, p. 97.



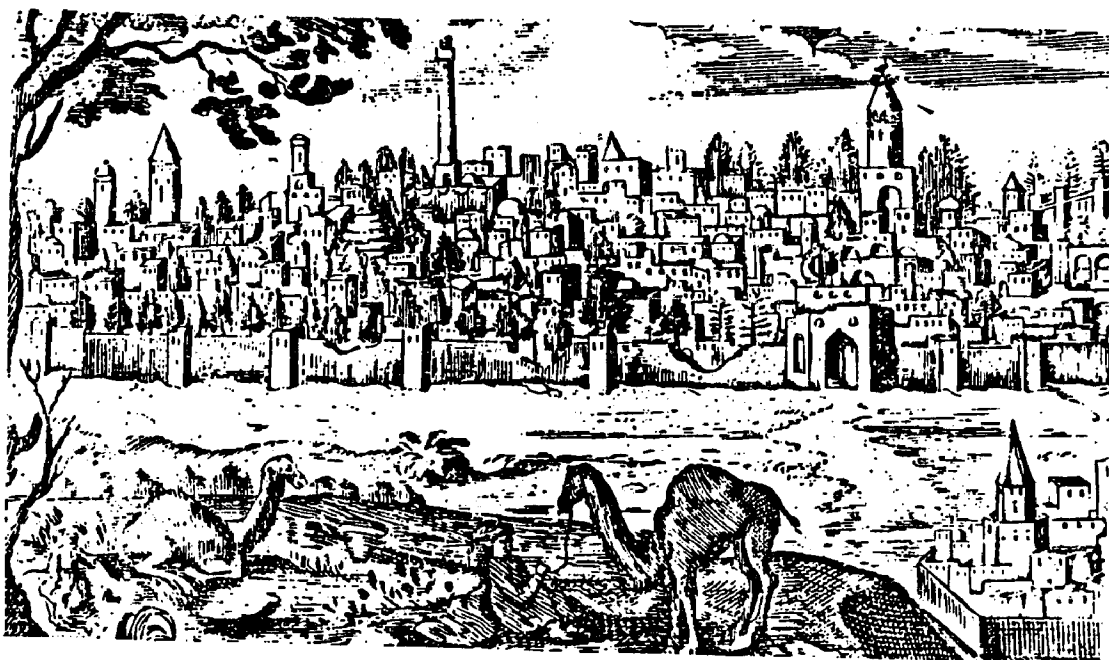
7.A. Shiraz. From Bastani Parizi, Siyasat va iqtisad, p. 459.



7.B. Sultaniyeh. From Bastani Parizi, Siyasat va iqtisad, p. 133. Original in Olearius.



8.A. Saveh. From Bastani Parizi, Siyasat va iqtisad, p. 129. Original in Olearius.



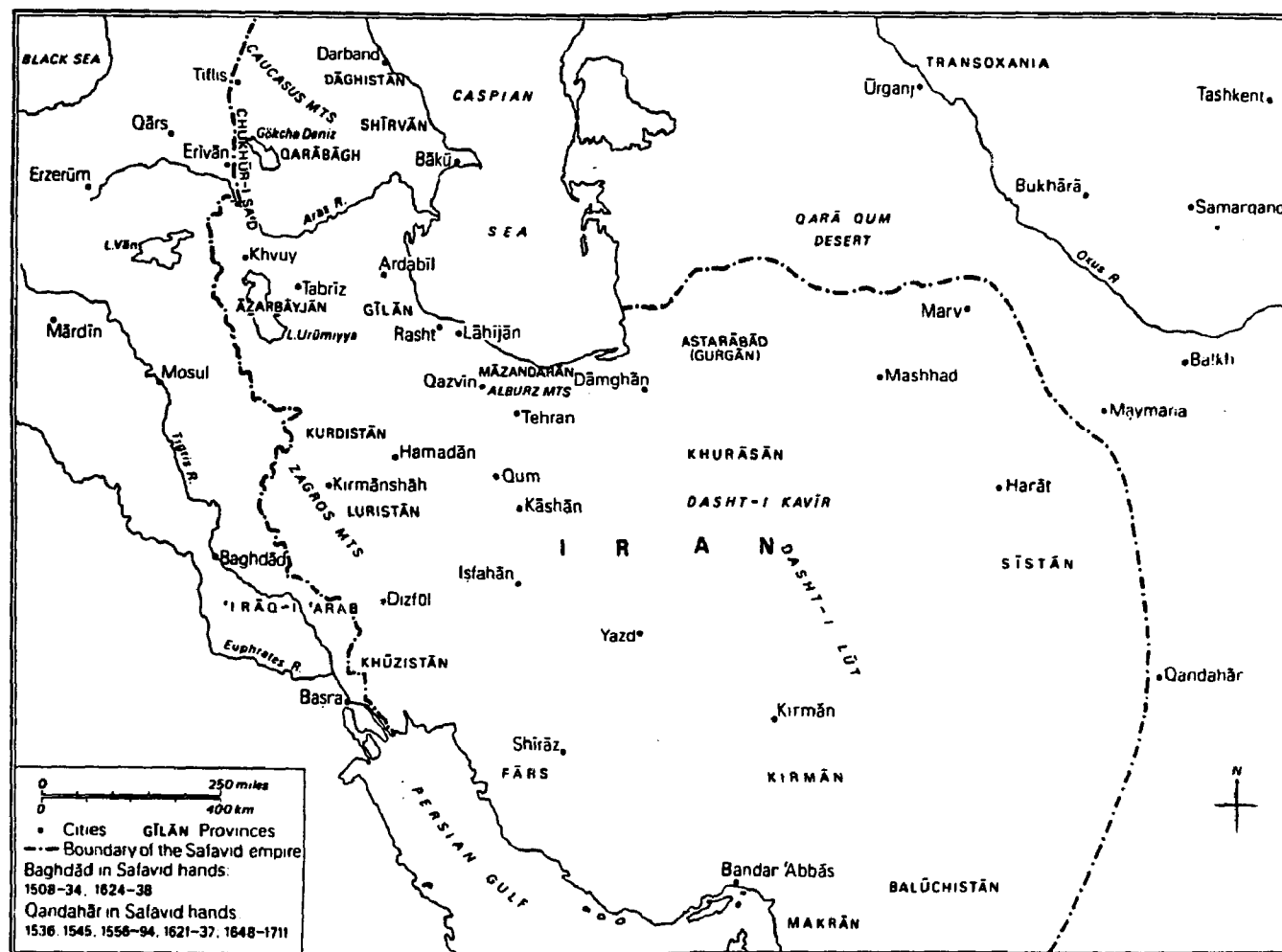
8.B. Qom. From Bastani Parizi, Siyasat va iqtisad, p. 142. Original in Olearius.



## **Appendix II**

### **Maps**

Map 2.1 From Savory, Iran under the Safavids, pp. viii-ix.



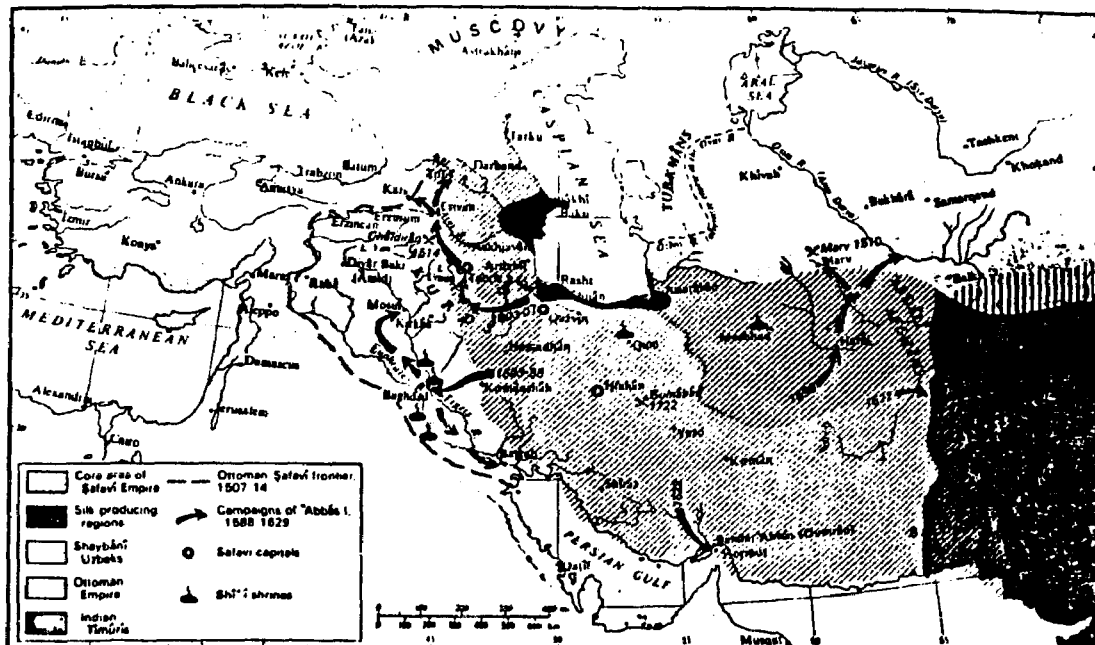
The Safavid empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Map 2.2 From Cambridge History of Islam, volume 1, p. 414.



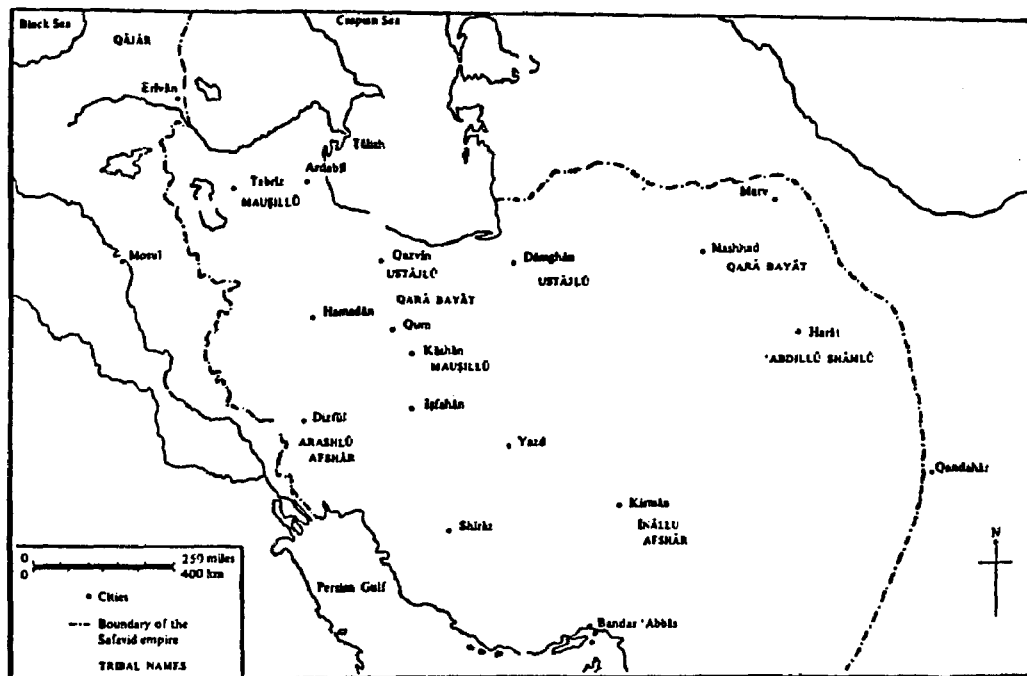
Map 2. Safavid Persia.

Map 2.3 From Hodgson, The Venture of Islam, volume 3, p. 36.



The Safavi empire, 1500-1722

Map 2.4 From Reid, Tribalism and Society in Islamic Iran, p. xiv.



Map of Safavid Iran.

Map 2.6  
From Cambridge  
History of Iran  
volume 1, p. 266.

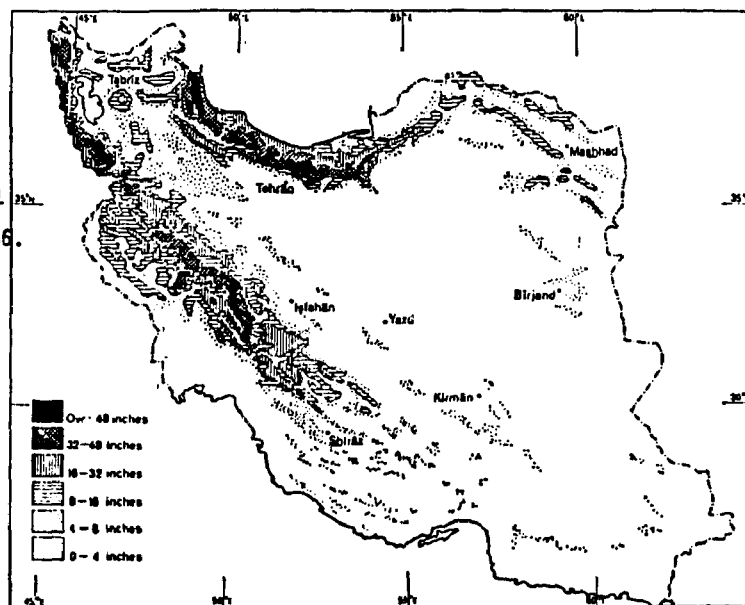
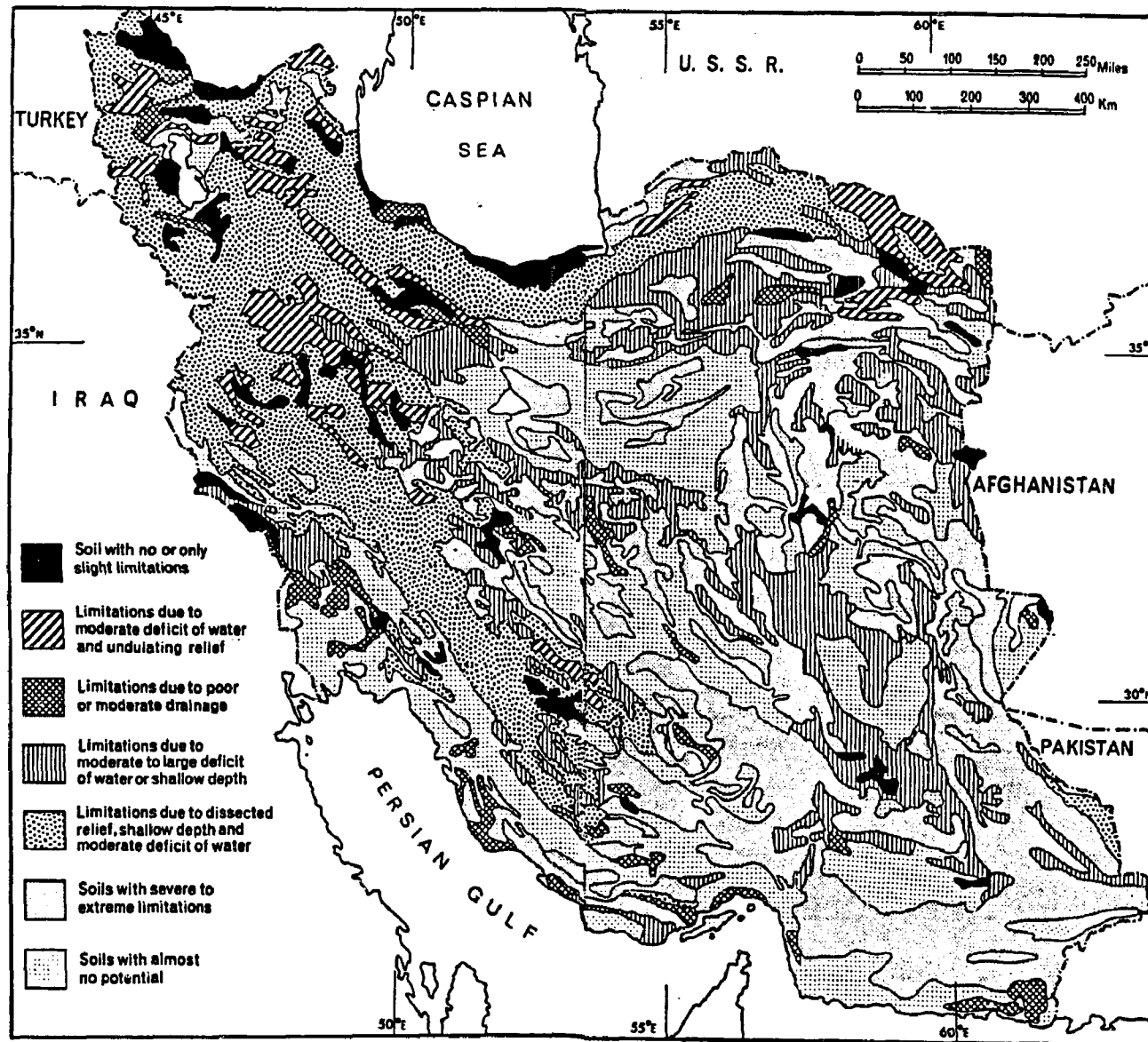
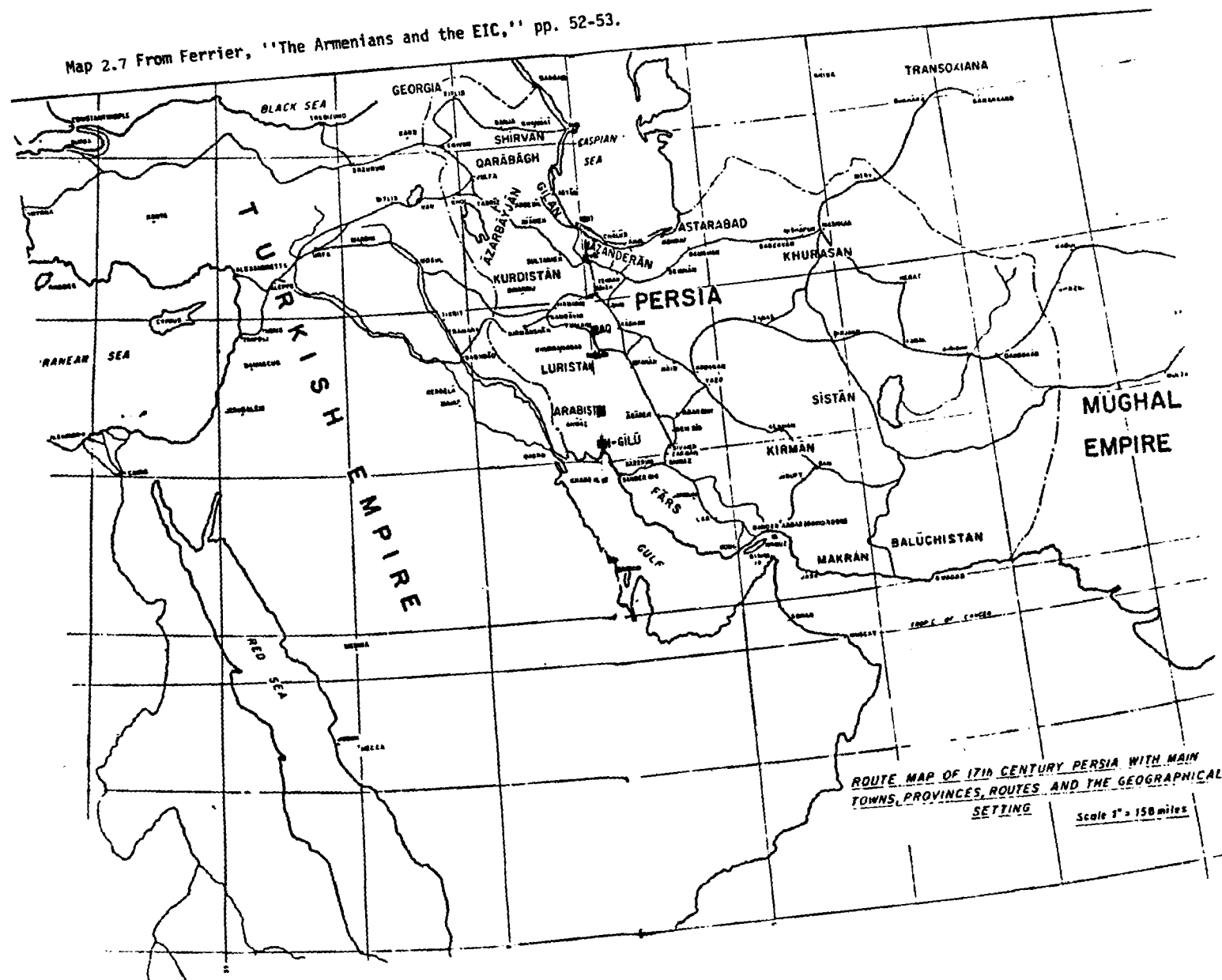


Fig. 86. Mean annual water surplus in Iran (adapted from Douglas B. Carter). All surpluses shown are seasonal, with summer a time of water-deficit throughout the country.

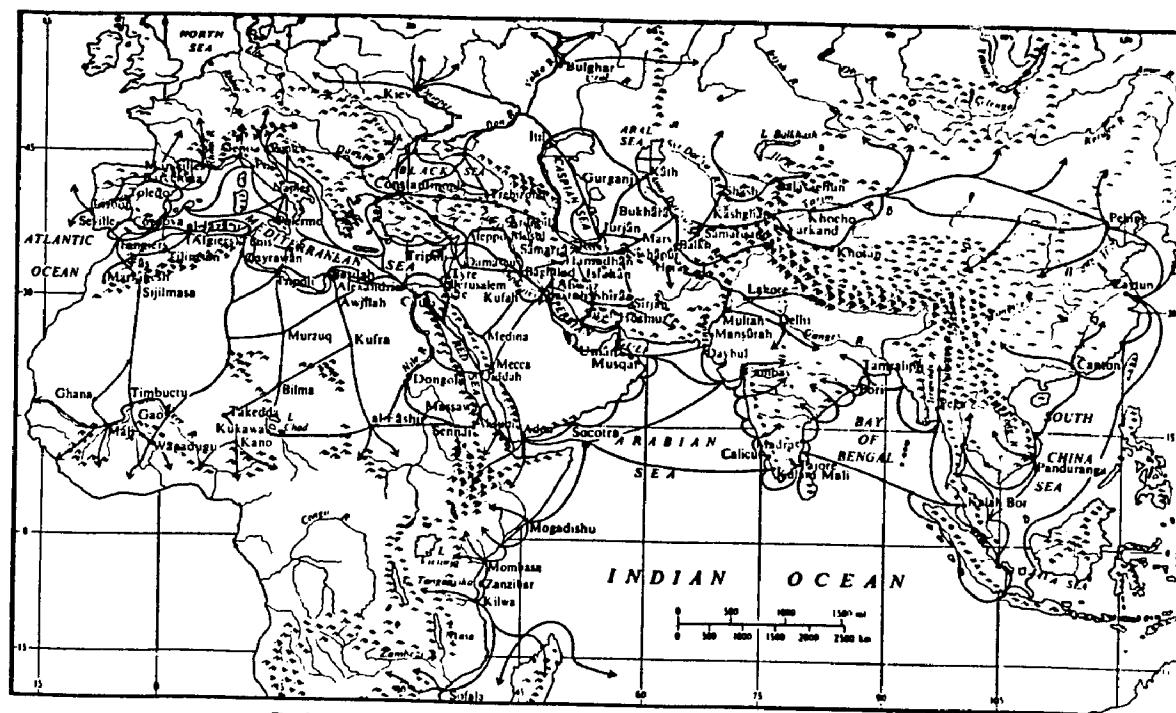
Map 2.5 From Cambridge History of Iran, volume 1, pp. 264-265.



Map 2.7 From Ferrier, "The Armenians and the EIC," pp. 52-53.

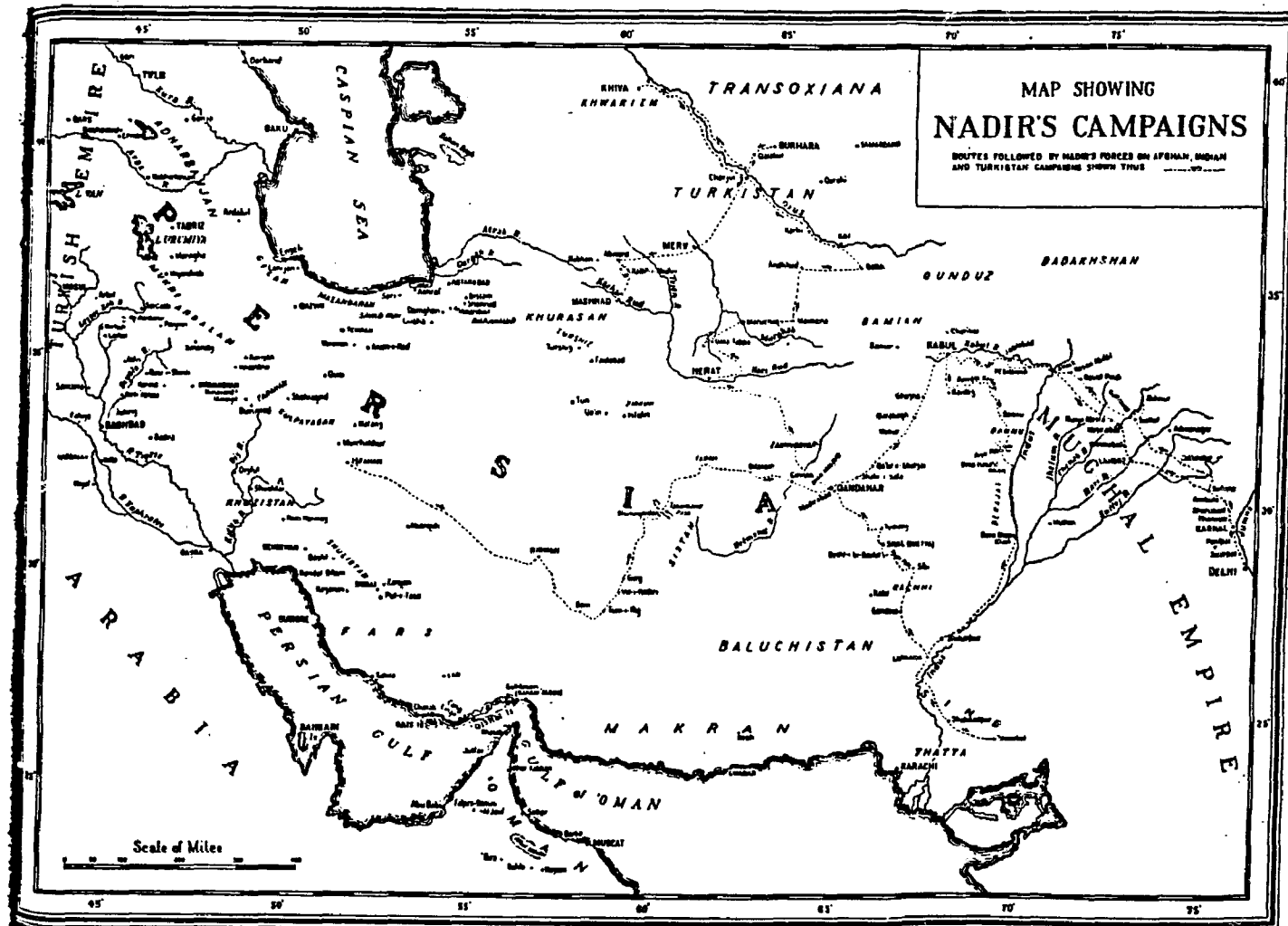


Map 2.8 From Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, volume 2, p. 75.

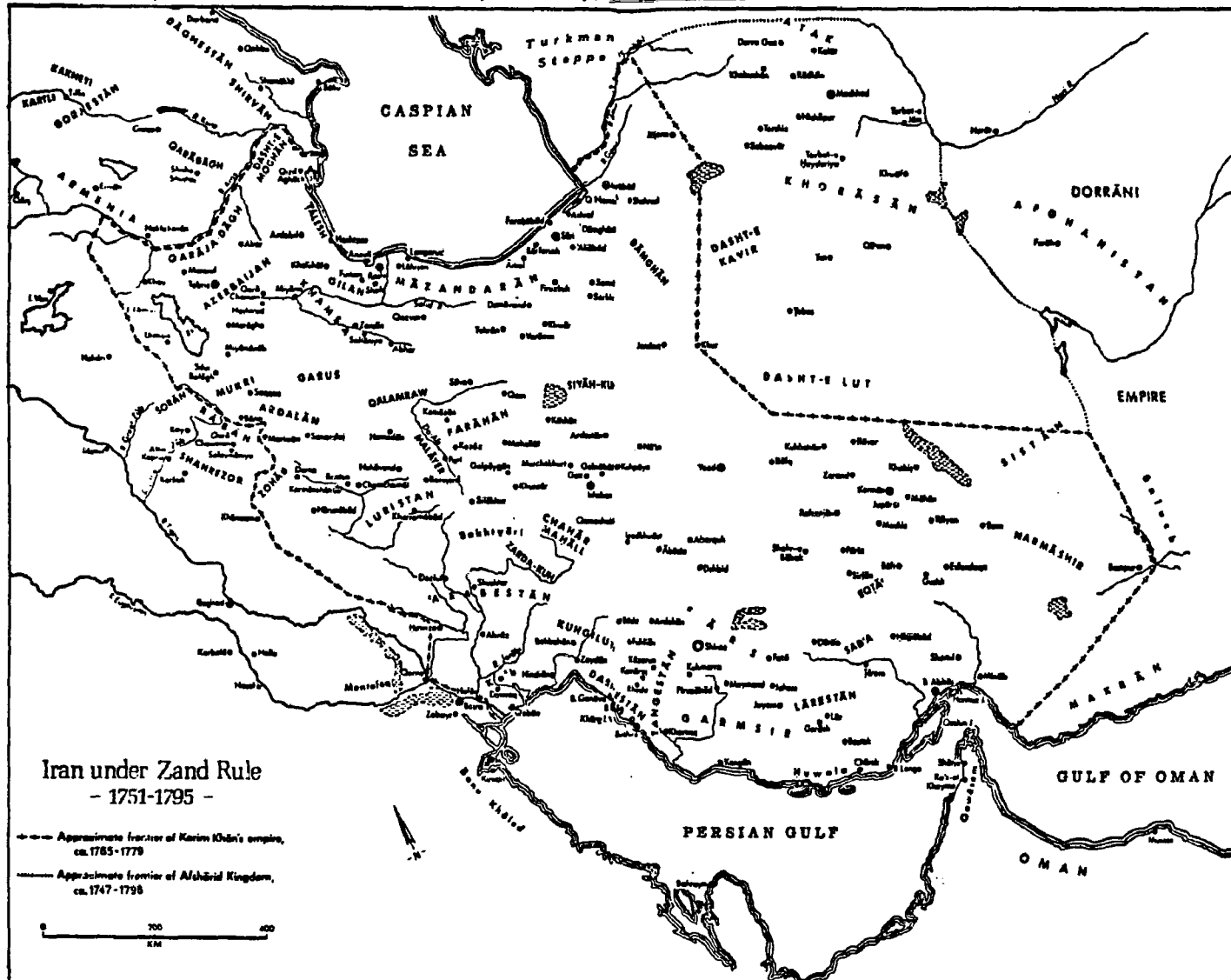


Trade routes through the Afro-Eurasian Arid Zone and the Southern Seas

Map 3.1 Iran under Nadir Shah, from Lockhart, Nadir Shah

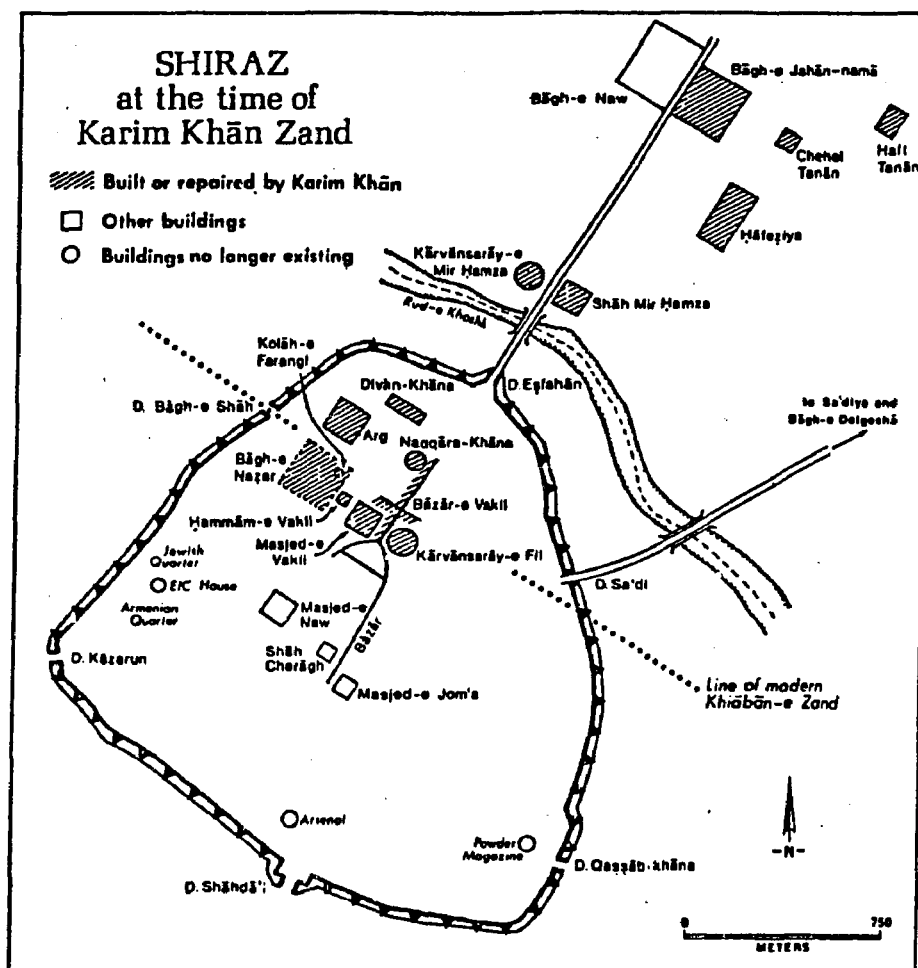


Map 3.2 Iran under Karim Khan Zand, from Perry, Karim Khan Zand



Map 3.3 "Plan of Shiraz",

from Perry, Karim Khan Zand, p. 273.





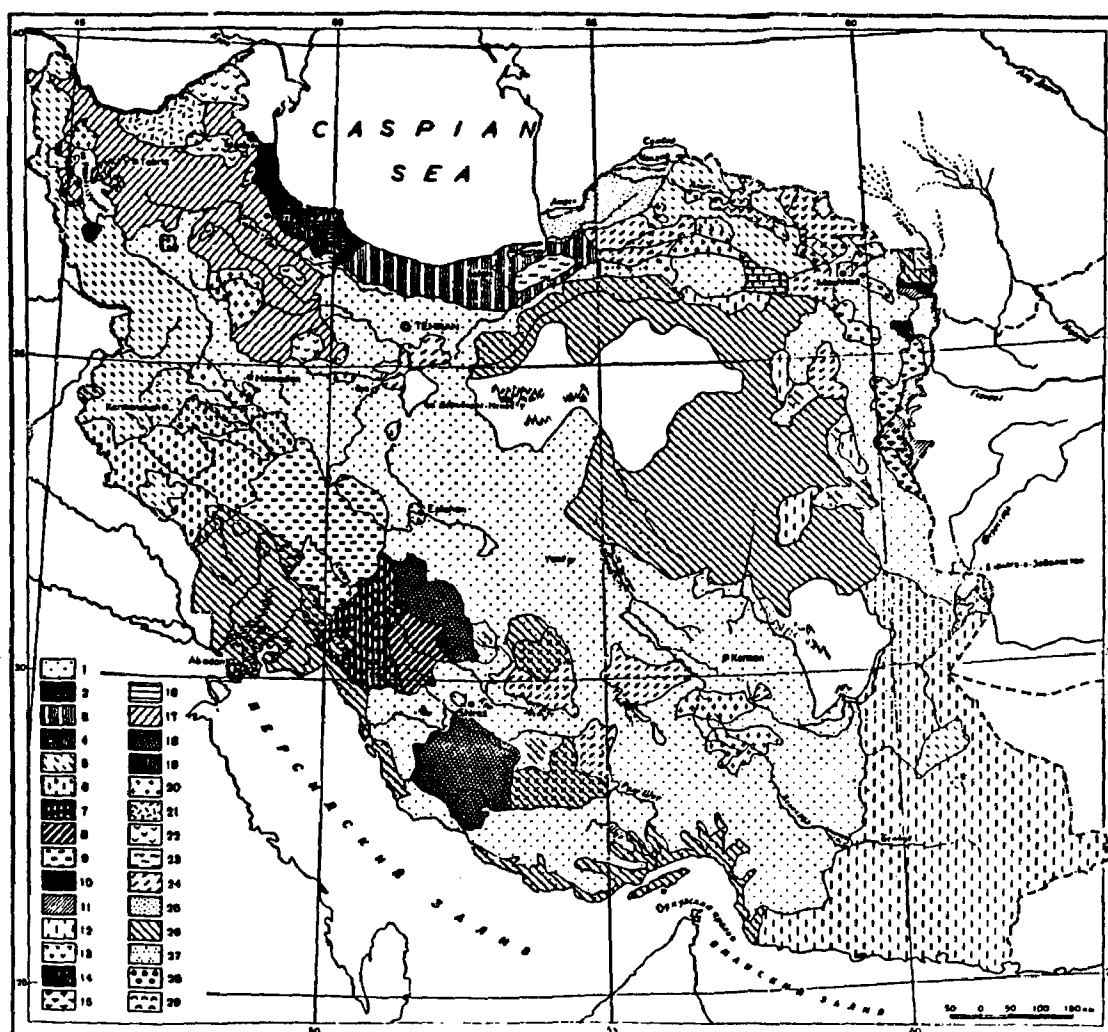
Map 4.1: From Gillard, The Struggle For Asia

Map 4.2: From Gillard, The Struggle for Asia





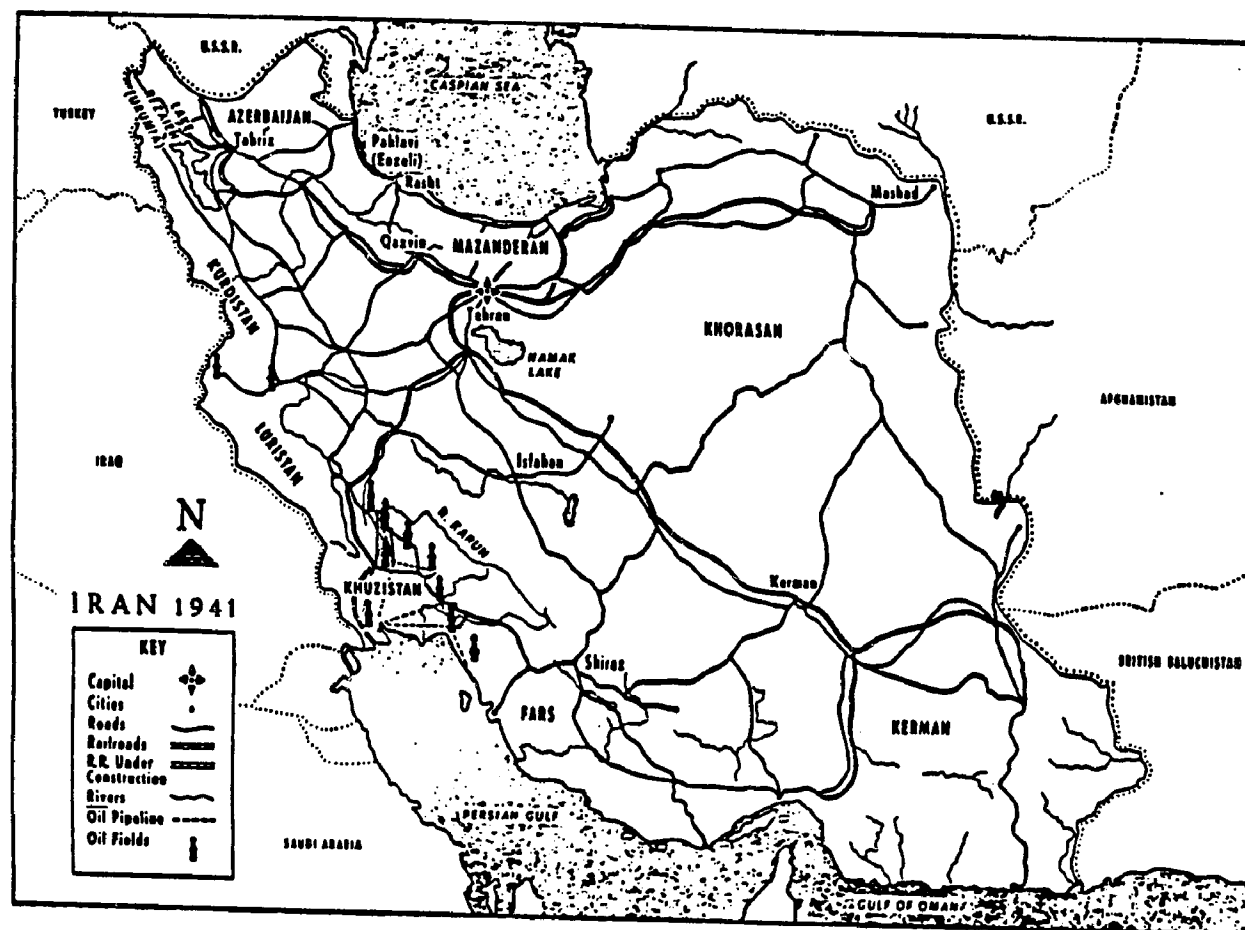
Map 4.3: The 1907 Anglo-Russian Partition of Iran.  
From Platt, Finance, Trade and British Foreign Policy

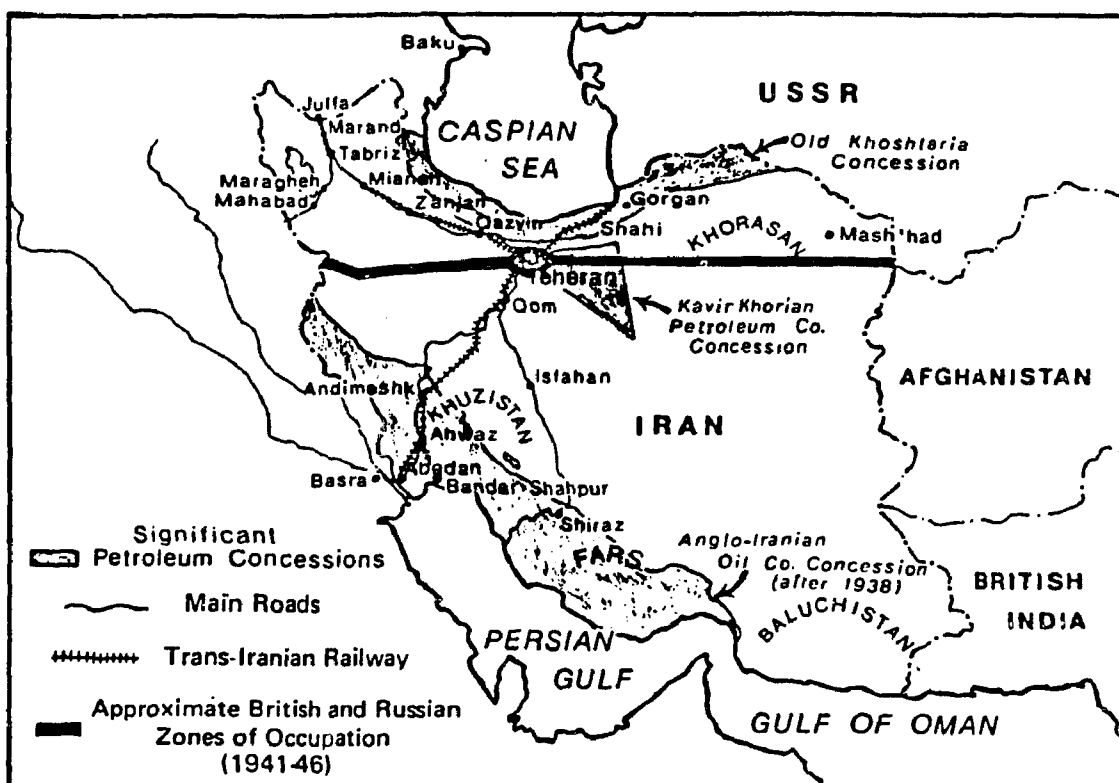


1. Iranians. 2. Gilākis. 3. Māzanderānis. 4. Galeshīs. 5. Kurds. 6. Lors. 7. Kuhgelis. 8. Mamasānis. 9. Bakhtiāris. 10. Tāleshis. 11. Afghans. 12. Baluchis. 13. Hazāras. 14. Jamshidis. 15. Taymuris. 16. Tajiks. 17. Āzərbayānis. 18. Qashqāis. 19. Qarelpākhs. 20. Afshars. 21. Qareh Dāghis. 22. Shāhsāvans. 23. Qājārs. 24. Turkic groups of south and east Persia. 25. Turkmens. 26. Arabs. 27. Armenians. 28. Assyrians. 29. Indians.

Map 6.1: Ethnographic Map of Iran, reproduced from *Sovetsky Etnografiya*, number 2, (1955), in *Central Asian Review*, volume IV, number 4 (1956), after p. 418.

Map 6.2: From Banani, The Modernization of Iran, opposite p. 1.

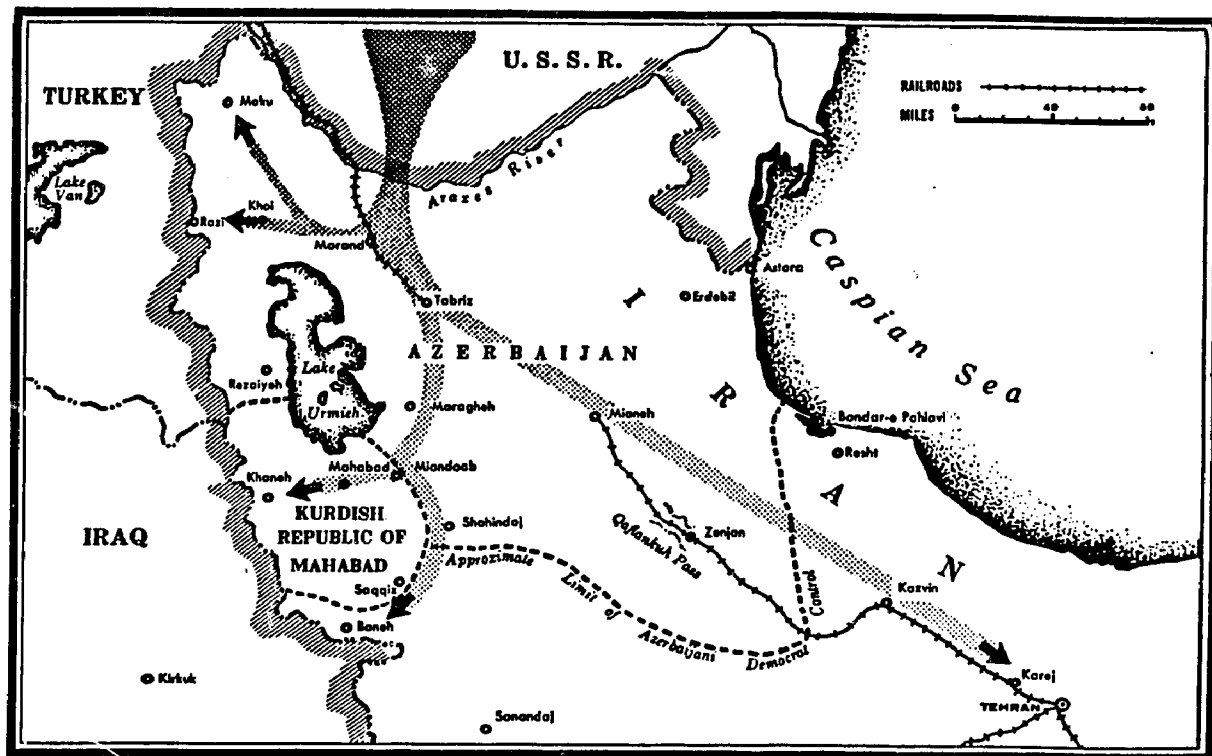




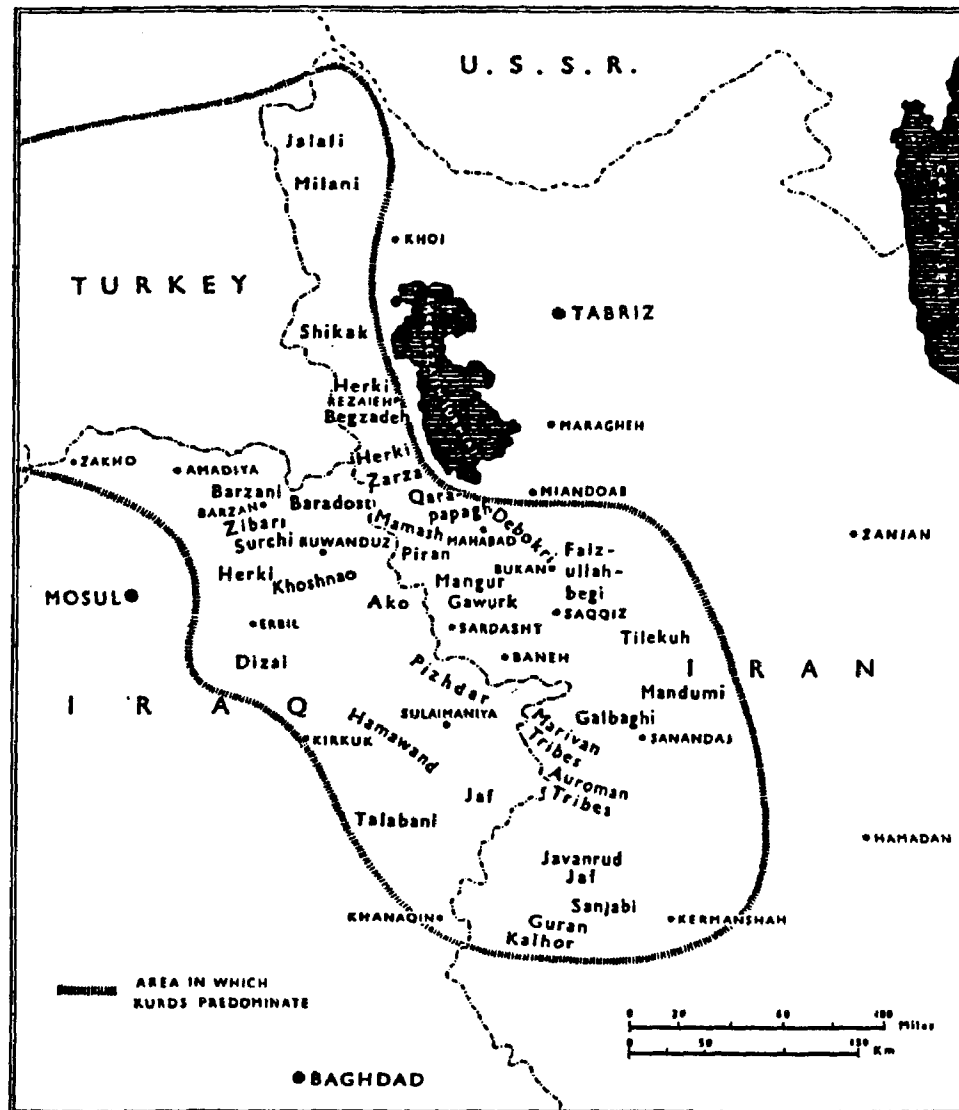
Map 7.1: British and Russian Zones of Occupation during World War 2, and Areas of Oil Concessions (proposed and actual), from Kuniholm, The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East, p. 141.



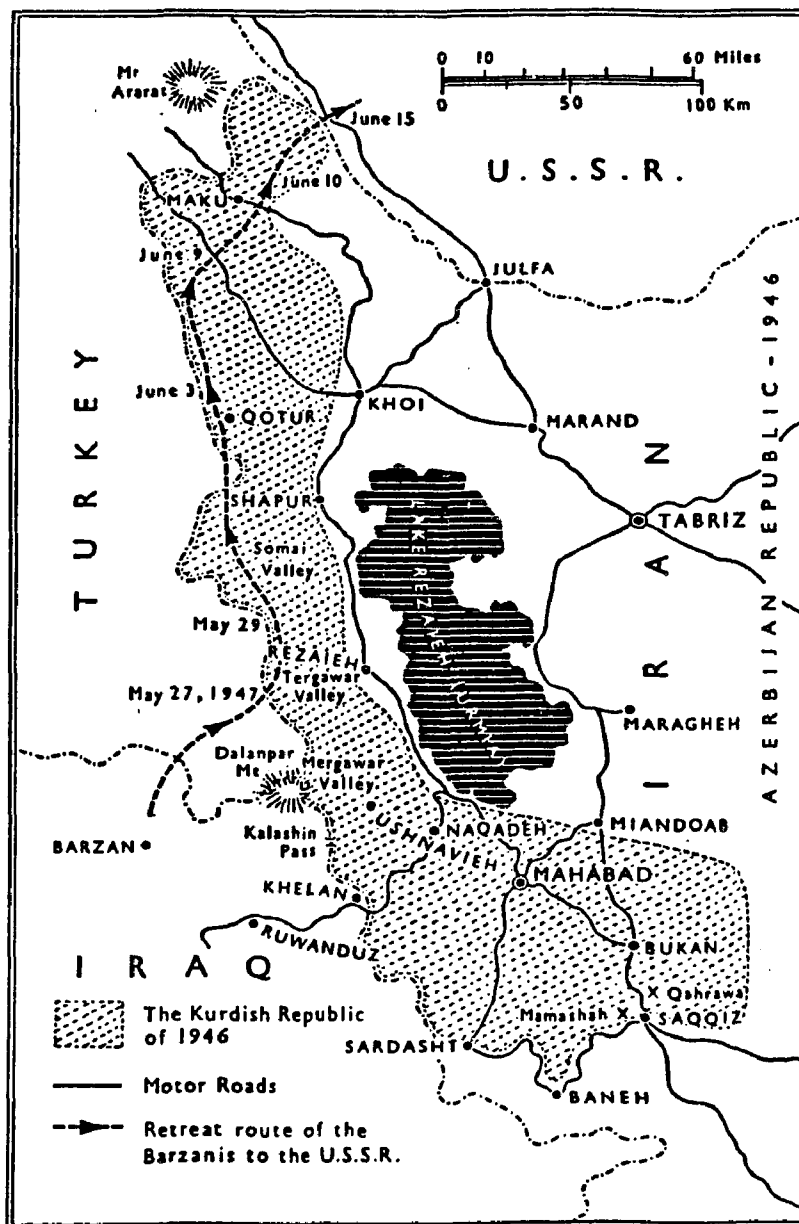
Map 7.2: Azarbaijan and Kurdish Territories, 1946, from Roosevelt, "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," p. 249.



Map 7.3: Alleged Soviet Troop Movements, March 1946, from Rossow, "The Battle of Azarbaijan," opp. p. 1.



Map 7.4: Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, with Main Tribal Areas, from Eagleton, The Kurdish Republic, p. 19.



Map 7.5: The Kurdish Republic, from Eagleton, The Kurdish Republic, p. 127.

### **Appendix III**

#### **Glossary of Persian, Arabic and Turkish Terms**

### Glossary of Persian, Arabic and Turkish Terms

<i>'alim</i>	a person trained in the religious sciences; singular of <i>ulama</i>
<i>amir</i>	a tribal chief; a military commander
<i>anjuman</i>	a society or association
<i>arbab</i>	an owner; a landlord
<i>'asabiyya</i>	tribal solidarity
<i>asnaf</i>	guilds (plural of <i>sinf</i> )
<i>'atabat</i>	the holy Shi'i cities of Iraq
<i>auqaf</i>	endowed properties (plural of <i>vaqf</i> )
<i>a'yan</i>	an urban notable; a "noble" in Safavid times
<i>ayatullah</i>	literally, "sign of God"; term for one of the highest-ranking <i>ulama</i>
<i>bast</i>	sanctuary; inviolability of persons who seek refuge in shrines and certain other places
<i>basti</i>	one who seeks sanctuary ( <i>bast</i> )
<i>bazaari</i>	a resident of the bazaar, usually a merchant or craftsperson
<i>buneh</i>	a peasant cooperative work team
<i>chadur</i>	the covering worn by Muslim women
<i>darugha</i>	an important secular municipal official in Safavid times
<i>farman</i>	a royal decree or edict
<i>fatva</i>	a religious opinion issued by a respected cleric (usually a <i>mujtahid</i> )
<i>ghulam</i>	literally, "slave"; term used for non-Iranian officers and servants of the Safavid state, converted to Islam (usually Georgians, Armenians and Circassians)
<i>hayat</i>	a gathering of friends for religious and social purposes
<i>hujjat al-islam</i>	a religious rank below that of <i>ayatullah</i>
<i>imam</i>	literally, "leader"; in Shi'ism, 'Ali (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law) and eleven of his descendants designated as leaders of the Islamic community
<i>imam jum'eh</i>	leader of the Friday prayers

<i>ijtihad</i>	the exercise of independent judgment in deciding matters of religious law by one qualified to do so
<i>'iqta</i>	in Safavid and pre-Safavid times, the grant of rights to land revenues in exchange for military or other service to the state
<i>jihad</i>	literally, "striving"; refers to war in defense of the faith, as well as a person's own inner struggle against base impulses
<i>kalantar</i>	the chief urban official in Safavid times; "mayor"
<i>khaliseh</i>	crown lands or personal estates of the Safavid shahs
<i>khan</i>	tribal chief
<i>khassa</i>	land held as part of the royal domain of the Safavids
<i>khums</i>	a religious tax of one-fifth
<i>komiteh</i>	committee; term for organizations established during the Iranian revolution to manage local affairs
<i>kran</i>	unit of currency in Qajar times, equal to one-tenth of a <i>tuman</i> and worth one-tenth of a in 1800, and one-fiftieth of a pound in 1900
<i>luti</i>	an urban tough; originally, a member of a local association of neighborhood protectors
<i>madrassa</i>	a religious seminary
<i>mahdi</i>	the "expected one"; term for the twelfth Shi'i imam who disappeared as a child in the ninth century and is expected to return at the end of time to restore justice to the world
<i>majlis</i>	a "gathering"; the national assembly after 1906
<i>malik</i>	a "lord"; landowner
<i>malik al-tujjar</i>	in Qajar times, the leading merchant representative of a city
<i>mamalik</i>	land that belonged to the state, and not to the monarch
<i>marja' al-taqlid</i>	literally, "source of imitation"; term for a leading Shi'i religious scholar followed in points of religious law
<i>mulla</i>	term for someone with religious training
<i>muhtasib</i>	market overseer in Safavid times
<i>mujahid</i>	literally, "one who strives for <i>jihad</i> "; term for a Constitutionalist fighter in 1906-11; later, name of a guerrilla organization (the <i>Mujahidin</i> )
<i>mujtahid</i>	an advanced legal religious scholar certified to rule on points of law and exercise <i>ijtihad</i>
<i>muqta'</i>	person on whom an <i>'iqta</i> land grant is bestowed

<i>mutavalli</i>	the administrator of an endowed property
<i>pishivaran</i>	bazaar craftspeople and small traders
<i>pish-namaz</i>	prayer leader
<i>qanun</i>	secular law; constitutional law
<i>qazaq</i>	a local, tribal-based independence movement
<i>qazi</i>	a judge of Islamic law
<i>qishlaq</i>	winter pasture grounds of a tribe
<i>qizilbash</i>	term for the original tribal supporters of the Safavid dynasty and tribal elite of the sixteenth century
<i>ra'iyat</i>	the subject population; a term for the peasantry
<i>Ramazan</i>	the Islamic holy month during which believers fast from dawn to sunset
<i>rial</i>	unit of currency in the twentieth century; in 1936, 18 rials were equal to \$1; in the 1940s, 32 rials; in the 1950s-1970s, about 75 rials equalled \$1
<i>sadr</i>	the chief religious official under the Safavid dynasty
<i>sarrafi</i>	a moneylender or money changer
<i>sayyid</i>	a descendant of the family of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>shagird</i>	a guild apprentice
<i>shaykh</i>	a tribal elder or leader
<i>shaykh al-islam</i>	a leading urban religious official in Safavid times
<i>shari'ah</i>	the body of laws governing a Muslim
<i>shura</i>	council; term for worker-run factory organizations set up in 1978-81
<i>sinf</i>	a guild or craft occupation
<i>sufi</i>	an Islamic "mystic," sometimes a member of an organized order
<i>suyurghal</i>	term for a grant of land in lieu of a salary
<i>tajir</i>	a large merchant; singular of <i>tujjar</i>
<i>tiyul</i>	in Safavid times, the right to the revenues of a piece of land in exchange for service to the state
<i>mullab</i>	religious students

<i>tuman</i>	unit of account in Safavid times, equal to 10,000 dinars (worth 3.33 pounds sterling in the mid-seventeenth century)
<i>ulama</i>	loosely, "the clergy"; Islamic scholars and preachers
<i>umma</i>	the Islamic community
<i>ustad</i>	a guild master
<i>uymaq</i>	a tribal "state" or confederation
<i>vaqf</i>	an endowed property, for religious or private beneficiaries
<i>vazir</i>	a minister or high advisor to the shah
<i>yailaq</i>	a tribe's summer pasture grounds
<i>zakat</i>	a religious tax, often used for charitable purposes
<i>zulm</i>	oppression, injustice

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